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T H E
HOLY SCRIPTURES
T H E
WORD of GOD:
PROVED and APPLIED
I N T W O
SERMONS
O N
HEBREWS i. 1, 2.

By *JOHN ATKINSON*, Minister of
the Gospel at *Stainton* in *Westmorland*.

*All Scripture is given by the Inspiration of God, 2 Tim.
iii. 16. The Law of thy Mouth is better unto me
than Thousands of Gold and Silver, Psal. cxix. 72.*

Credimus & confitemur Scripturas Canonicas San-
ctorum Prophetarum & Apostolorum utriusq;
Testamenti, ipsum esse verbum Dei; et Authorita-
tem sufficientem ex semetipsis non ex hominibus
habere. *Confess. Helvet. Pag. 6.*

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T H E P R E F A C E.

I*F all the Knowledge we can possibly think of, to furnish and cultivate our Minds with the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, is the most necessary and useful; for they only are able to make us wise unto Salvation, through Faith, which is in Christ Jesus. What Man of God can desire more powerful Motives to study, believe, and love the Scriptures, than those most excellent ones that shine in them; such as, All Scripture is given by the Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works? Can any Thing be more prevailing with us to search the Scriptures daily and diligently than this, that they testify of our dearest Lord Jesus? This, of all other Arguments, is the strongest and sweetest, Christ is there. No Book that ever was writ does, or in any Measure can, reveal, urge, and recommend Truth, Holiness, and Righteousness to us, as the Bible does. Whatever Instruction in, or Encouragement to, Faith and Practice, we find in any other Book, is either fetch'd from the Bible, or it is little worth: It is either grounded upon the Holy*

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Scriptures, or it is the unholy Fruit of corrupt Reason. If we do not light our Candle at the Light of the Gospel, our Light, in reference to our eternal Concerns, is but thick Darknefs. The Scriptures contain the pure Word of God, even that Word, which, through the Blessing of Heaven, illuminates the Dark, quickens the Dead, purifies the Unclean, comforts the Sorrowful, and is a noble Means of Salvation, both to Jew and Gentile. Is it not then astonishing to consider what detestable Methods Men take to discredit and abase the Holy Scriptures! Some undervalue them, and boldly rail at, and wickedly banter them; others undermine them, and labour to overthrow the Foundation laid in them; and others lop off one Text after another. Men various ways shew their ill Will to the good Word of God.

Passing by others who make a virulent Opposition to the Truths of the Gospel, I shall, at this Time, make a few Remarks only on some Things in the Reverend Mr. Joseph Dodson's Twelve Discourses. I have perused them carefully, yet cannot remember that, in any Part of the whole Book, he ever once says, that Jesus Christ is the most high God, or the one only living and true God, the same God the Father and Holy Spirit is: I think, he never calls Christ God, from one End of his Book to the other. Now is it not very unaccountable, that, in twelve Sermons, Christ should never be declared to be the one true God, especially when we consider, that, in these Sermons, he is discoursed of as the Joy of his People, as the great Christian Prophet, as a Priest, and as the Author of our eternal Salvation? Is it possible that a Minister should thus neglect Christ, as the most high God, in these great Matters, if he did not really deny him to be so? Where is there Occasion of holding out Christ as the great and true God, if not in discoursing of him, as Prophet, Priest, King, and Saviour? Among all the Grounds he gives us of glorying in Christ, this is none of them, my Lord, and my God. Had he said, that
Christ

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Christ is the God of Believers, he had said more, and more to their Joy, than all he has said of Christ in all his Sermons. It is certain, that neither Mr. Dodson, nor any Man living, can prove Christ to be such a Prophet, Priest, King, and Saviour, as he is described to be in the Holy Scriptures, except he be the most high God; and therefore they who deny him to be so, deny him to be such a Prophet, Priest, King, and Saviour, as the Holy Scriptures declare him to be. Neither do I remember that he has any where, in all his Sermons, asserted, that the Holy Ghost is the true God, or the most high God. And they who deny the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to be God, deny the God that is spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, and leave us nothing therein to build the least Hope of Salvation on; they know well enough they do thereby quite spoil the Bible; they take the Substance and Kernel out of it. They who deny Christ to be God, can find Salvation without Christ; and so little a Matter is Salvation with them, that they can find it any where, even among the wild and wicked Heathen, that never heard of Christ: There is no need of Christ for the eternal Salvation of Sinners with such Men.

*Arianism and Heathenism, I see, go together, and very plainly, in some Authors. Mr. Dodson says *, I conclude, from the preceding Observations, that there is Hope for the poor Heathens, to whom Christ has not been revealed, that they may be saved, though they do not believe in him. Now this is directly contrary to many plain Texts of Scripture: In Acts iv. 10, 11, 12. speaking of Jesus Christ, it is expressly said, This is the Stone which was set at nought by you Builders, which is become the Head of the Corner; neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved. Certainly then, to*

* His Twelve Discourses, Pag. 410.

say,

say, that there is Salvation in any other but Christ, is to give the Apostle the Lye; For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 11. And therefore the Salvation of the Heathen is a Superstructure without a Foundation; a Building without a Bottom. Christ has declar'd, that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and that no Man cometh unto the Father but by him, John xiv. 6. It is express, John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him. And Christ himself tells us, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins, John viii. 24. Certainly that Man values not what Christ says, who can, after he has read these Texts, say, That any can be saved without Faith in Christ.

*A learned Bishop says, * And indeed, if they who presume to affirm, and that too from the Holy Scripture, that a man may be saved in any Religion, without Faith in Christ, if they do not wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, for my part I know not who can. For there is no Heresy can be more destructive to Mens Souls, or more repugnant to the whole Design of the Gospel, than this is: For to what purpose did Jesus Christ come into the World to save Sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. if Sinners could be saved without him? To what purpose did God give his only begotten Son, That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, John iii. 16. if any Man may have everlasting Life without believing in him? To what purpose did he give a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 6. if there be any that have no Occasion for it? — To what purpose did he require, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations, Luke xxiv. 47. if People of any*

* Beveridge, Vol. III. Pag. 81, 82.

Nation might repent, and be pardoned by any other Name as well as his? To what purpose was the Gospel written? Was it not, *That we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life through his Name?* John xx. 31.

*But Mr. Dodson goes on, * Were, says he, the Jews of old, who had Types and Shadows, to lead them to the Knowledge of Christ crucified, pardoned and saved, upon their Repentance, without Faith in him? And shall not a penitent and vertuous Heathen be saved because he believes not in Christ, of whom he has never heard a tittle? To the former of these Questions, Were the Jews of old, who had Types and Shadows, to lead them to the Knowledge of Christ crucified, pardoned and saved, upon their Repentance, without Faith in him? I answer, That the Jews of old were not pardoned and saved without Faith in Christ, but by Faith in Christ then to come, and no other ways; and this is evident upon these Reasons, 1. Because the Apostle speaking of all our Fathers that were under the Cloud, and passed through the Sea, says expressly, That they did all eat the same spiritual Meat, and did all drink the same spiritual Drink (for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ) 1 Cor. x. 1, 3, 4. And surely this was not done without Faith in Christ. 2. The Jews were to believe the Promises of God. And the first great leading Promise was that of the Seed of the Woman, Gen. iii. 15. That Promise made to Abraham, that in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed, Gen. xxii. 18. is by the Apostle applied to Christ, Gal. iii. 16. And 'tis certain that Abraham did believe in Christ; for he saw his Day and was glad, John viii. 56. Besides, we have Abraham held out to us as the Father of all them that*

* His Twelve Discourses, Pag. 410.

believe,

believe, and as in the Steps of whose Faith we should walk, *Rom. iv. 11, 12. and therefore Abraham believed in Christ, or we need not.* Jacob believed, that the Scepter should not depart from *Judah*, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until *Shiloh* came, and that unto him should the Gathering of the People be, *Gen. xlix. 10.* Holy David believed in Christ the Son of God as King of *Zion*, *Psal. ii. 6, 7.* *Isaiah* had such a clear Faith in Christ to come, that he spoke of him as if he had been born and given in his Day, *Isa. ix. 6.* It seems plain that it was the Faith of all the Prophets, that the Redeemer should come to *Zion*, and unto them that turn from Transgression in *Jacob*, *Isa. lix. 20.* 'Tis certain God spake of Christ as the Redeemer of his People, or as a raised Horn of Salvation for us in the House of his Servant *David*, by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began, *Luke i. 68, 69, 70.* By Faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, *Heb. xi. 5.* *Enoch* believed and prophesied of Christ, *Jude, ver. 14, 15.* *Noah* was a Preacher of Righteousness, and was an Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith, *2 Pet. ii. 5.* *Heb. xi. 7.* 3. 'Tis plain Christ was included in the Commonwealth of *Israel*, because those who were Aliens to that Commonwealth, were for that very Reason, and at that Time while they were so, without Christ, and had no Hope, and were without God in the World, *Eph. ii. 12.* 4. Their expiatory Sacrifices pointed out Christ: And they could depend upon them for Mercy and Favour with God, only as these Sacrifices bore Reference to Christ; to rely on the Act it self was what God neither delighted in nor required, *Psal. xl. 6, 7.* *Heb. x. 4, 5, 6, 7.* 5. Because the Blessing of *Abraham* comes on the Gentiles through *Jesus Christ*, therefore *Abraham* himself had his Blessing through Christ, *Gal. iii. 14.* 6. Because both Jew and Gentile are saved through the Grace of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, *Acts xv. 11.* A learned
 Author.

*Author says **, For as there is but one Salvation, so there is but one way to attain unto it ; to wit, Faith in Christ. The Faith of the Fathers is one and the same with the Faith of the Children. There was never any Man saved without the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, neither is at this Day saved, neither shall be hereafter to the End of the World. *The Reverend Mr. Marryat says †*, All the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Saints among the Jews, had a Participation in Christ, eat of that heavenly Manna, and drank of those living Fountains which Jesus is to all Believers, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

I come now to Mr. Dodson's latter Question, to wit ; And shall not a penitent and virtuous Heathen be saved, because he believes not in Christ, of whom he has never heard a tittle ? I answer, and ask another Question, Where is, or ever was there, a truly penitent, virtuous Heathen ? Let him give one Instance in all the Pagan World, if he can. Is it not enough to convince any Man, that he who is still an Heathen, never yet thoroughly repented of his heathenish Practice ? And then what is his Repentance, who still lives in the gross Ignorance, execrable Idolatry, and most abominable Courses, the Heathen live in ? That such a Man has Repentance good enough to be accepted with God unto eternal Life, surely none but an Heathen will say ; and methinks, even he should blush to say it. Two or three Things may fully satisfy every true Christian, that no Heathen, living and dying such, can be saved. This is plain, 1. From what the Scripture says of the Heathen. The dreadful Aggravation of the Sins of God's People, and of the Kings of Israel, was their doing according to the Abominations of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the Children of Israel, 2 Kings xvi. 3. Chap. xxi.

* *Atterfall on Numbers, Pag. 813.*

† *Exalted Saviour, Pag. 73, 74.*

2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. *It was the fearful Punishment of the Lord's People to be scattered among the Heathen, Ezek. xxii. 14, 15. Jer. ix. 15, 16. And when the Lord had Thoughts of being merciful to them, of being sanctified in them, and of giving them new Hearts and new Spirits, then he took them from among the Heathen, Ezek. xxxvi. 23, 24, &c. In the first Chapter to the Romans we have a very true, but a dismal Account of the Heathen; They changed the Glory of the uncorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four footed Beasts, and creeping Things; and hereupon God gave them up to most abominable, unnatural, and hellish Sins. The Apostle Paul look'd upon the Heathen Magistrates or Judges to be all unjust, and such as were unworthy to judge the smallest Matters, 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2. And, are such wicked Creatures to be look'd on as Heirs of Salvation? 2. The Notions and Lives of the best of the Heathen moral Philosophers, as they are handed down to us by learned Men, shew us, that they were far from a State of Salvation. Their Notions of a future State were most ridiculous, and about Virtue it self blasphemous; and their Lives shamefully wicked and abominable. Mr. Nathanael Taylor has ingeniously exposed some of their Fooleries, in his Preservative against Deism. But, 3. The best Works of the best of Heathens are essentially defective. Every Thing is wanting in all that they do, that makes a Work a good Work. They perform nothing, not one Duty, as they ought. A good Work is doing the Will of God, as he has commanded us; it is doing that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and this is his Work in us through Jesus Christ, Heb. xiii. 21. Heathens never do a good Work, nor can they: 1. Because they do nothing from Union with Christ. And it is in Christ Jesus that we are created unto good Works, Eph. ii. 10. And Christ himself says, As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine,*

Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me, *John* xv. 4. And, without me ye can do nothing, *ver.* 5. 2. Heathens *do nothing from a right Principle; nothing from the Spirit and Grace of God. Works are good only as they come from, and are sanctified by, the Holy Ghost; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 16. Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, are the Fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 21, 22. And to say that these are the Fruits of our own Reason and Will, is to contradict this Text, and put our own Spirit in the room of God's. Heathens are not renew'd in the Spirit of their Minds; their Minds are vain, their Understandings darkened, their Hearts hardened, their Consciences unpurged; and out of such Hearts nothing can proceed but evil. They are not cleansed from one Sin, because not cleansed by the Blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all Sin, 1 John i. 7. Heathens have neither Grace nor Truth in them, because both these come by Jesus Christ; and therefore where Christ is not, neither of these are. They do nothing from Love to God in Christ, nothing from Faith in him; and yet without Faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. 3. Heathens do nothing at all to the Glory of God. They glorify him not as God: Nor can any so glorify God, but by Jesus Christ; That God in all Things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iv. 11. All Fruits of Righteousness are by Jesus Christ unto the Glory and Praise of God, Phil. i. 11. I conclude this with what the great Dr. Owen says, * There neither is, nor ever was in the World, nor ever shall be, the least Dram of Holiness, but what flowing from Jesus Christ is communicated by the Spirit, according to the Truth and*

* Discourse on the Spirit, Page 325.

Promise of the Gospel : *And consequently not one dram of Holiness among the Heathens.*

My Author * hints, *That the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were justified, and consequently in a State of Salvation, though they did not believe in a crucified Saviour, nor had any Notion of his dying for their Sins. I answer, 1. It is certain that all the Disciples of Christ, that were justified and saved, were justified and saved by Faith in Christ. They believed, and therefore they spake, and confessed to Christ, and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God: This was what they did assuredly believe. John vi. 69. And we believe and are sure, That thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 2. The Disciples of Christ who were saved, would, and they did, stick close to Christ for Salvation, whether he would save them by Life, or by Death. He was the glorious Person they would depend on for everlasting Life. When many turned their Backs upon Christ, he said unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter, in the Name of the rest, answered, and said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life, John vi. 67, 68. As if he had said; we will never leave thee, Lord, for eternal Life is with thee, and on thee will we depend for it. 3. We must consider, that there is a fundamental Difference betwixt no Faith at all in Christ, and a true Faith in him as the Son of God, though this Faith be accompanied with some Darkness and Ignorance. It is one Thing to throw by Christ wholly, and another Thing to be ignorant, for a Time, of the particular Way that Christ will take in our Deliverance: One Thing, and a sad Thing indeed, to have no Christ, no Foundation to build our Hopes of Heaven on; another Thing to have Christ the only Foundation, though we build Hay and Stubble upon him.*

* His Twelve Discourses, Pag. 410.

Though

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Though when Christ discoursed to his Disciples of his Sufferings, it is said, they understood none of these Things; it is plain, to me, these Words are not to be taken in an absolute Sense, as if they understood nothing at all of them; for how then came they to be troubled and sorrowful when they heard them? Matt. xvii. 22, 23. Were they exceeding sorrowful for they knew not what? No surely, they understood and believed these Things in some Measure; but the Way and Manner of Christ's saving Sinners, was, at that Time, in some Degree, hid from them; yet still they relied on him for eternal Life.

*But this Author * brings in the Case of Cornelius, as a Proof that an Heathen may be sincerely pious, and that his Piety may be accepted of God, and rewarded by him; and yet he is forced to own, that Cornelius had renounced his Heathen Idolatry, and worshipped the true God. So that I would hope, that when he says an Heathen may be sincerely pious, he means no such Thing; he only means, that he, who has renounced his Heathenism, may be sincerely pious: and this is very true; and this was the Case of Cornelius: He had renounced his Heathenism, was a Profelyte amongst the Jews, probably had heard many Things of Christ, was seeking farther into the Way of Salvation, and was ready to hear all Things that God had commanded Peter to say to them: And Peter says expressly, The Word which God sent unto the Children of Israel, preaching Peace by Jesus Christ, (he is Lord of all) that Word (I say) you know, which was publish'd throughout all Judea, Acts x. 33, 36, 37. So that Cornelius knew that Peace came by Jesus Christ; but he wanted to be further instructed in these Things; and Peter told him Words whereby he and his House should be saved, Acts xi. 14.*

* His Twelve Discourses, Pag. 412.

But

*But Mr. Dodson goes on ; for you must know, that as he is an unwearied Advocate for the Heathen on the one hand, so he is a bold Opposer of the Knowledge of Christ, as necessary to Salvation, on the other. The Ninevites, says he *, are a plain Instance, that an Heathen, without any Knowledge of Christ, may be a true Penitent, and bring forth acceptable Fruits of Righteousness. I answer, that nothing like this can ever be proved, from any Thing that is said of the Ninevites in God's Word. It is true, the People of Nineveh believed God ; 'tis not said in God, and proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth, from the greatest of them, even to the least of them ; and they turned from their evil Way. But how did they these Things ? only in a common natural Way ; here was no such Repentance, or Fruits of Righteousness, as were acceptable unto Salvation, and therefore they obtained only a common Mercy, the Lord spared them, Jonah iv. 11. They had a little Respite, he defer'd his Judgments for a Time, and then God's furious Wrath broke out most dreadfully upon them, as is evident from the iii^d Chapter of Nahum. Thus this Gentleman has spent some of his rash Zeal, out of a Desire to enlarge his Hearers Charity : What Charity he means, he best knows ; but certainly it is no Christian Charity to tell any Man living, that he may be saved without Faith in Christ. But of those many Persons who are leading this unthinking wicked Nation back to Heathenism, some take one Way, and some another.*

Mr. Dodson has a Question, by his Answer to which he sets Christianity on a narrow Bottom ; I would hope it is not that it may the more easily be overthrown. However, though it is a Question of very great Moment, yet he appears to me to answer it with little Concern for Christ's Honour, and with little Regard to God's Word.

∫ * His Discourses, Pag. 412.

The Question is this * ; What does the Gospel make necessary to be believed by every Man, to make him a Christian? *His Answer is* ; That the Faith which particularly denominates a Man a Christian, is believing in *Christ* ; or, which is the same Thing, believing that *Jesus of Nazareth* is the true *Messiah*. *I cannot easily persuade my self, that, by this Answer, he means what the Words most fairly import, to wit, that believing in Christ, or believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, is the only Thing to be believed, as necessary to make a Man a Christian.* 1. *Because if he does, then he contradicts himself, when he says ;* † *Since our Lord's Resurrection from the Dead, the Belief of it is absolutely necessary to the Being of a Christian.* 2. *Because the Texts he brings to prove it, prove that more is necessary, to wit, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, as well as that he is Christ. The first Text he mentions, is 1 John v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God : But he may see, in that same Chapter, that they who are born of God, must, and do, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, Ver. 5. Yea, that he is very God, the same Being that the Father and Holy Ghost are, Ver. 7. His next Text is Acts viii. 37. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; which, says my Author ||, is the same Thing, as if he had said, I believe that Jesus is the Christ, or the promised Messiah : But this is not to explain Scripture, but to throw it away. According as the Words are translated, he hereby throws away the whole Predicate ; he loses one half of the Sense of the Words : He says, Jesus is the Christ, or the promised Messiah ; but the Text says more, to wit, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If we take the Words as they run in the Original, I believe the Son of God*

* His Discourses, Pag. 414.

† Ibid. Pag. 418, 419.

|| Ibid. Pag. 414.

to be Jesus Christ, then he rejects the whole Subject, to wit, these Words, the Son of God, and shrimps up the whole Text only into the Predicate; and not only so, but he also transposeth the Copula, puts the Verb out of its Place, and says, Jesus is Christ, or the Messiah; whereas the plain Sense is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; or, that the Son of God is Jesus Christ; that is, the Son of God is the Saviour, the Messiah: so that it is as necessary to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, as that he is the Messiah; and, it is evident, this was what the Eunuch believed; and, 'tis certain, this was what all the Apostles believed, John vi. 69. But lest, after all, it should be contumaciously held, that believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, is the only Thing that makes a Man a Christian; I shall briefly shew, 1. That it is false. 2. Dishonourable to the Christian Religion.

1. It is false. For, besides this, it is necessary to believe, (1.) That the one true God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus we are to be taught; into this Name we are to be baptized, Matt. xxviii. 19. therefore this we are to believe. (2.) Who the Messiah is: Whether he is God or Man, or both, or neither, that we may know whether we must worship him or not. (3.) That we are Sinners, and cannot save our selves. (4.) That Jesus Christ is our only Redeemer and Saviour, and very God, and very Man, in one Person; for we must not trust for eternal Salvation in we know not whom. (5.) That we must be born again of the Holy Spirit, and made new Creatures in Christ, if ever we would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. 'Tis shamefully dishonourable to the Christian Religion to assert such a Thing: A vile Reflection upon the sacred Scriptures; that there are so many great Truths, so many Commands, so many Promises and Threatnings laid down in the Bible, and not one of them all, but one, necessary to be believed, in order to make a Man a Christian.

Christian. If this be not under-valuing the Word of God, and setting aside many Truths in it, as unnecessary, what can be so? Has God spoke but one Truth in all the Bible, that is necessary to be believed, in order to make a Man a Saint indeed? Has God commanded all Men, every where, to repent; and yet need no Man, any where, believe that Repentance is necessary to his being a true Penitent? Has God commanded us to hope in his Mercy, to love, fear, and obey him; and yet are none of these Commands necessary to be believed, that we may be sincere Lovers of God, and Doers of his Will? Are we expressly told, that he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and can we be true Christians without believing either? What, not one Thing necessary to be believed, in order to be a true Christian, about the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Session, or Intercession of Christ, but only this, that he is the Messiah? Did Jesus Christ give himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works? Did he bear the Sins of many? Did he put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself? Has he reconciled us unto God by his Death? Are we justified freely by God's Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ? And what, is there not one Word of all this, except one, necessary to be believed, that we may be true Christians, or true Believers in Christ? Let them believe this who will, for indeed I cannot. Arians and Socinians believe that Christ is the Messiah; what, are they Christians? That they are, I am perswaded is more than he, or any Man else, can prove. Mahometans believe that Christ is the Messiah; what, are they also Christians? As good as any, according to the aforesaid absurd vile Position, which looks to be calculated for the Mahometan Meridian. Now

we see somewhat of the Meaning of this Gentleman's Charity, which seems to beſt to bring Arians, Socinians, and Mahometans, into the Churches of Chriſt, as true Members thereof. I hope his Charity will ſtop there; and that he will allow, that it is neceſſary to believe that we muſt have more Faith, or a better Faith, than the Devils have, before we can be true Chriſtians; and yet they believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt; ay, and they believe that he is the Son of God too; and that is a fuller Confeſſion than ſome who pretend to be Chriſtians will either confeſs or profeſs in theſe Arian Days: But the more abominable is their Sin and Shame.

But Authors, who thus ſlight and pervert the Holy Scriptures, dare go on farther, and tell us, that ſuch and ſuch Texts are not Scripture, or elſe that we have no Right to them. Mr. Dodſon ſays, Not that I think we have any Right to the following Promiſes, John xiv. 26. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my Name, he will teach you all Things. And John xvi. 13. When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth. It muſt be owned, he ſays, that theſe Promiſes were peculiar to the Apoſtles, and to the Chriſtians of the Apoſtolic Age; but more eſpecially to the Apoſtles. But the learned Dr. Owen gives us a quite contrary Account of this Matter; and ſhews us, that it is not only falſe, but dangerous, to confine theſe Promiſes unto the Apoſtles, or the firſt Age, or Ages of the Church. His Words are theſe†: The Promiſes concerning the Miſſion of the Holy Spirit, in theſe Chapters of the Goſpel (of John) ch. xiv, xv, xvi. are not to be confined unto*

* His Twelve Diſcourſes, Pag. 165.

† The Cauſes, Ways, and Means, &c. Pag. 55, 56.

the Apostles, nor unto the first Age, or Ages of the Church. To do so, is expressly contradictory unto the Discourse and whole Design of our Lord *Jesus Christ* unto that Purpose; for he promiseth him in Opposition unto his own temporary Abode in the World, namely, that this of the Spirit should be for ever, *Chap. xiv. 16.* that is, *ἕως τῆς συντελεως τοῦ αἰῶνος*, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* unto the Consummation of the whole State of the Church here below. And to suppose the contrary, is to overthrow the Foundation of all Truth and Comfort in the Church; for their Preservation in the one, and the Administration of the other unto them, depend on the Accomplishment of this Promise alone: And so also do all the Benefits of the Intercession of *Christ*, which are no otherwise communicated unto us, but by the Holy Spirit, as given in Pursuit of this Promise; for what herein he prayed for his Apostles, he prayed for all them that should believe in him, through this Word, unto the End of the World, *John xvii.*

There are several other very foul and dangerous Assertions in Mr. Dodson's Twelve Discourses; such as, It is very doubtful whether by the Angel mentioned in Exod. xxiii. 20, 23. be meant the Son of God; that Faith is our justifying Righteousness; that the Lord Jesus Christ was not to officiate as High Priest upon Earth; that the Design and End of the sufferings of Christ is defeated; that by the Gospel mentioned in Heb. iv. 2. is meant the Promise of the Land of Canaan. He also asserts, that God the Father is the ultimate Object of all our religious Addresses, and the original Fountain and Cause of every Thing that exists; and this is very true: But if he means, that he only is so, exclusive

of the Son and Spirit, it is a plain Denial that the Son and Spirit is the same God that the Father is. But to give an Answer to these, and some other Things in his Discourses, would draw out the Preface too long. However, one Thing I would further observe here is, what all the Nation may see, and should groan under; and that is, That now, when Arianism and Deism ~~abound~~, the greatest Wickednesses and Immoralities abound also: Just as these abominable Notions spread, so spread the most gross and vicious Practices. Arianism and Deism are attended with all Manner of Ungodliness, unjust Dealing, Cursing, Swearing, Lying, Forgery, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Theft, and all imaginable Villany. They who, at the Beginning of these our Arian Days, could say, That glorious Times were coming on, may now see that they were false Prophets, or Prophets that take Darkness for Light, Evil for Good, and blaspheming God for glorifying his Name. It is now, when Deism and Arianism rage, that that most horrible, shocking, and detestable Sin of Sodomy is practised, and Cabals of that Hellish Crew herd together. It is now, when Arianism and Deism are professed and abetted, that the Lord's Day is most shamefully profaned, his Word abused, his Worship scoffed at, and the Ministers of the Gospel ridiculed for preaching Christ. Some live like Heathens, or worse; they seldom, or never, go to any divine Worship; others are no sooner out of the Church, or Meeting-House, but they are in the Ale-House, carousing and drinking away all Convictions, (if ever they have any) as if they were resolved that nothing that is Good shall stay with them. Any Thing on the Lord's Day, though it be never so wicked and scandalous, rather than hearing, reading, praying, or meditating on heavenly Subjects. These are
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the bitter and lamentable Fruits Men get for countenancing and encouraging Arianism and Deism; those Seeds of the bottomless Pit, on which these Fruits grow. It is now, when Deism and Arianism grow, that not only desperate wicked Practices are encouraged and liv'd in, but the wildest and most pernicious Notions that ever were known are broach'd; such as these, That Christ is a subordinate God; that Christ is neither God nor a Creature; that the Holy Ghost is Christ's Creature; that Baptism and the Lord's Supper may be observ'd, or not, just according to the Custom of the Country; that Knowledge or Faith is not properly Religion; that the Ten Commandments were given to the Jews, and them only, and don't oblige Christians. These are some of the nonsensical and immoral Rants of our polite Arians; and some of them are so strangely infatuated as to say, that they can as soon believe Transubstantiation, as that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are One God, or equal in Power and Glory: And it is probable they may; for they who can believe that Christ is a subordinate God, or a Medium betwixt God and a Creature, are in the greatest readiness to believe any Thing in all the World, but the Truth; they may easily believe Transubstantiation: For the Papists transubstantiate one Creature into another; but this is but trifling, the Arians cleaverly out-do them; for they transubstantiate a Creature into a God. The Papists, as they say, can transubstantiate a Wafer into the very Body of Christ, and one would think this is pretty dextrous; but it is but whiffing to the Arians Art, for they can transubstantiate a Creature into a Creator, a finite into an Infinite, and a derived into an independent Being. So that an Arian may be a Papist well enough; but I question much, whether a
Papist

Papist can be an Arian, except he widen and enlarge his Principle of nauseous Nonsense. All these wicked Notions and Practices are the certain Effects and Fruits of abusing and throwing by the Bible. Men that slight God's Word, and prefer their own corrupt Reason before it, will live as they list, or as they lust, in all manner of beastly Practices; as is evident from the Lives of many in this Day. When the Bible is gone, God in Christ is gone, his Laws are gone, his Ordinances are gone, all Springs of Holiness, and all Hopes of Happiness are gone. Lay aside the Bible, and then every Man will be his own King, his own Priest, and his own Prophet; and why may he not? Who can shew one Command, from God, to the contrary? Lay aside the Bible, and what can we expect, but mobbing, and robbing, and murdering, and such like horrid Abominations? Persons that throw by the Holy Scriptures as needless, and value not the Bible, do thereby plainly tell the World, that they are for no Obedience to God, no Justice or Equity towards Men. What need have we all then, as ever we desire to honour God, to do good to others, or be instrumental in our own Salvation, to prize very highly, and converse much with, the Holy Bible!

In the following Papers is prov'd, the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures; they are God's Word, and must be believed and obeyed as such, else we shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. The Two following Sermons contain the Substance of Three; and though the former stands mostly as it was preach'd, yet in the latter there are several considerable Alterations.

The P R E F A C E. xxiii

May they, through the special Blessing of Heaven, be helpful to endear many to God's pure Word, and holy Ordinances! and to stir up many, in this back-sliding Day, to read and study the Holy Scriptures; and bear the Ministry thereof with greater Concern, Affection and Care than ever! O, what need is there of effectual fervent Prayers to God, That he would send out his Light, his Truth, his Mercy, and his Grace, that they may lead us, and bring us unto his holy Hill, and to his Tabernacles! O pray, pray, pray, That there may be abundantly more of the special Presence and Power of the Spirit of God in the Churches of Christ! And then, and not till then, will the Power of Godliness revive; then will Faith, Hope, Repentance, Love, Humility, and every other Grace, encrease and flourish; then will our Obedience to God be pleasant and unwearied; and then will Zion be a Praise in the Earth; and every Saint, from an experimental Taste of God's Goodness in his Word and Ordinances, joyfully sing and say, How sweet are thy Words unto my Taste! Yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth. I will delight my self in thy Statutes; I will not forget thy Word. Into whose Hands soever these Sermons may fall, I most importunately intreat, that if they can pray in Faith, they would pray for the Author; O, cry to God, that his Grace may be sufficient for me; and his Strength made perfect in my Weakness! That I may understand the Scriptures, and be a good Minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the Words of Faith, and of good Doctrine! That I may preach God's Word, and be instant in Season and out of Season; and always in opening and preaching of the Holy Scriptures may give God's own Sense and Meaning thereof to those that hear me! O, may I through God's special
Affi-

Assistance, faithfully, and with all plainness, as long as I live, preach not my self, but Christ Jesus the Lord! And may I, and all that hear me, firmly believe in Christ, love him most dearly, obey him constantly, and be Happy with him for ever and ever in Glory!

John Atkinson.



S E R-



S E R M O N I.

HEBREWS i. 1, 2.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, Hath, in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son —

OF all Books that ever were writ, the *Holy Bible* is the most necessary, and the most excellent; as *that only* shews us who God is, what we are, and how we may be happy for ever; as *that only* contains in it every Truth and Command that is necessary to be believed and obeyed, and every Promise that can make us holy here, and happy to all Eternity. And that which sets the *Bible* beyond all possible Comparison above every other Writing whatever, and commends it infinitely above all human and angelical Expressions, is this, that it is *the Word of God*. This, this is it that most highly, and with all imaginable Endearment, recommends it to all those who reverence,
B love,

2 *The Holy Scriptures the Word of God.*

love, and obey God, and would have his infallible Direction in their way to Glory. There is not a Man upon Earth, that would walk safely to Heaven, but must needs greatly rejoice in this, that his Way thither is chalk'd out by God's own Hand: God's written Word is his unerring Guide to the *New Jerusalem*.

The Words of my Text give us this most excellent Character of the Holy Scriptures, that *God spake them*; *God spake in time past*, heretofore, or of old, *unto the Fathers by the Prophets*; and God hath, *in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son*. The infinitely wise and good God, who cannot speak amiss, who ever speaks infallible Truth, is the Speaker here mentioned.

He spake, *πολυμερῶς*, that is, by Parcels, or by many Parts; not all at once, but gradually; they had here one Piece, and there another; here a Promise, and there an Oath, and then the Ordinances of Circumcision and the Passover. And, after that, there were such rising Degrees of Light, and such clear Discoveries of the blessed *Messiah*, that, at length, Prophecies of him looked more like History. *Isaiah*, in his most elegant Prophecy, talks rather like a Man who had actually accompanied Christ in all his Sufferings, and seen him die, and dead, and buried, and risen again, than one who lived, as he did, some Hundreds of Years before *Christ* came in the Flesh.

God spake, *πολυτρόπως*, by many Turnings, casting or shaping his meaning diversly, into various Forms or Moulds: He spake by Visions, by Dreams, by a lively Voice, by Inspiration, and sometime Face to Face. Thus God spake *by*, or rather *in* the Prophets, and *in* his Son; for it is, *ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, ἐν υἱῷ*. God spake immediately *in* the Prophets, and *in* the Son, and by them unto us: And certainly nothing can be so necessary, so certain, or so advantageous to precious Souls, as what God himself

himself has immediately spoken! O how happy are we who have this blessed Word! What a commanding Influence should it continually have over our Thoughts, Words and Actions! For God hath spoken it.

God hath, *in these last Days*, spoken unto us. Whether by the *last Days* here be meant the last Days of the *Judaical Church and State*, whose Period was just at hand; or the Days of *Christ's personal Ministry* while here upon Earth, together with the Time of finishing the Canon of Scripture, which Time was then near approaching; or the Ends of the World, which are come upon us, I shall not now say; but if this last, we may note from them, *That as we live in the last Days, so we should put to our last, our greatest Strength and Vigour to make a good Improvement of them.* The last Days look with a double Aspect upon us; some of them are dark and lowering, others bright and clear; and let this drive us to the precious *corner Stone*, to the *sure Foundation*, where we may sit and sing, chuse what Weather comes. Some of these last Days will be the worst Days that ever Eyes beheld, or Ears heard of: Days wherein Sin and Error will reign in Perfection; Days of more unreasonable, wicked, and furious Opposition to Truth and Godliness; Days of more open, daring, bitter scoffing, and ridiculing the Worship, Ordinances, and Ways of God; Days of more impudent Profaneness, Debauchery, and all manner of Immorality, than ever was known before, where the Word of God was settled; *In the last Days perilous Times shall come,* 2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

But chuse how bad these Times are, yet they will have an End; the Redemption of God's People from all their Oppression and Persecution draweth nigh; their eternal Deliverance from all Sin and Sorrow is just at hand. O that they may be abundantly ready to meet their almighty Deliverer *Jesus Christ*! These are the last Days, in this

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respect, that we have in them the last *Revelation* of the Will and Mind of God, concerning the Salvation of Sinners, that ever we shall have. We shall have no *new Christ*, no *new Doctrine*, no *new Sacraments*, no *other Gospel* reveal'd from Heaven, than what we *now* have. We have the last Edition of the Word of Salvation; yea, and, blessed be the Lord, the best Edition too; for God hath, in these last Days, spoken unto us *by*, or *in*, his Son. The Edition we have of the everlasting Gospel, was put forth by the Son of God, the *Lord Jesus Christ* himself; and therefore we may look for glorious Times under this Dispensation: But we are sure those Times we now live in are not they. While the Enemies of the *Bible*, the *Deists*, and the Blasphemers of the Son and Spirit of God, the *Arians* and *Socinians*, abound; while great *Babylon* flourishes, or *Satan* is loose, Times will not be glorious Times. But, when *Babylon* is actually fallen, finally and totally destroy'd; when the *Pope* and all his vile Crew are gone, and the *Deists*, *Arians*, and *Socinians* are not, and *Satan* bound, then will be happy Times indeed. *When the Vail that is spread over all Nations shall be destroy'd, the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it; and when there shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd over Jew and Gentile, throughout the whole World; then will be glorious Times truly.* Such Times as these, even such as will be every Way becoming the last and best Edition of the *Gospel*, we will wait, and pray, and hope for. God has spoken to us *by his Son*, and the Words spoken shall, through the Blessing of Heaven, shine forth most gloriously where and when the *Lord* pleases: So that some of these last Days will (maugre all present and future Opposition) be the best Days, the brightest, the most holy and blessed of all the Days that ever were known upon Earth.

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Earth. They will be Days wherein the Sun of Glory will illuminate the whole World, and, by his enlivening Beams, transform Thousands upon Thousands, and ten thousand Times ten thousand of dark, deformed, and dead Sinners, into bright and beautiful Saints, and work the Saints themselves into most *exquisite Mirrours* of glorious Light and Holiness. O Lord, hasten on these blessed Days!

But it may be ask'd, *Why is it said, that God bath, in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son?* Had the Son of God no Hand in the Old Testament Revelation? I answer, Yes, certainly he had: Though one * thinks, 'Tis undeniably evident, that neither the Law, nor yet any Prophecy, relating to Gospel Times, was deliver'd by the Son of God under any former Dispensation. But this Assertion is undeniably false; For, 1. If Christ be the one true God, the same God that the Father is, as certainly he is, then he is the Author of the *whole* Old Testament, as well as of the New, together with the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the Author of all the Holy Scriptures. 2. It was the Son of God, the second Person in the sacred Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, who did appear on Mount Sinai, spake to Moses, and deliver'd him the Law there. Two Things will make this very plain. 1. It was *Jehovah*, the Lord God of Israel himself, who did so: This cannot be denied by any, who will allow the express Sense of the Scripture to determine the Case; for it was the Lord (*Jehovah*) that came down upon Sinai, on the Top of the Mount; the Lord (*Jehovah*) that called Moses up to the Top of the Mount, and said to him, Go down, charge the People, &c. *Exod. xix. 20, 21.* And it was the Lord (*Jehovah*) their God, that spake all the Words of the Ten Commandments, *Exod. xx. 1, 2.*

* Mr. Joseph Dodson's Twelve Discourses, Pag. 226.

And

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And he (the Lord, *Jehovah*, who made Heaven and Earth) gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two Tables of Testimony, Tables of Stone written with the Finger of God, *Exod. xxxi. 18.* These Words (the Words of the Ten Commandments) the Lord (*Jehovah*) spake unto all your Assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the Fire, of the Cloud, and of the thick Darkness, with a great Voice, and he added no more; and he wrote them in two Tables of Stone, and delivered them unto me, *Deut. v. 22.* And the People do expressly acknowledge, over and over again, that the Lord, who spake in the Mount, and gave the Law to Moses, was the Lord their God; so that it is most evident it was *Jehovah*, the one only living and true God himself, that spake with Moses in Mount Sinai. It was not any Creature whatever, not any one of all the Angels; and therefore what is said of Angels, relating to this Matter, as, *They received the Law by the Disposition of Angels, Acts vii. 53. The Law was ordained by Angels, Gal. iii. 19. The Word spoken by Angels, Heb. ii. 2.* may import, that the Angels were *Jehovah's* shining Train, and splendid Attendants, ministering to the Glory of that wonderful Day; his noble Witnesses to that admirable Work, and possibly his loud Heralds, or Proclaimers of the Law unto the People, upon Moses's receiving it from the Lord. *Jehovah* was the immediate Author, Writer, and Deliverer of the Law to Moses, though Angels might minister in the awful Promulgation of it. 2. This is evident from what is said of *Jehovah*, who spake to Moses on Mount Sinai: For, 1. He is called an Angel, *Acts vii. 38.* and the Angel of the Lord (*Jehovah*), and Lord (*Jehovah*;) for so is the Angel of the Lord, (*Jehovah*) who appeared unto Moses in a Flame of Fire out of the midst of a Bush, called, *Exod. iii. 2, 4.* And, in *Ver. 6.* he declares himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The *Jehovah*, who
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went before the People of *Israel*, led them in their Way, and brought them out of *Egypt*, is the *Lord*, *Jehovah*, who gave the Law to *Moses*; and he is called an *Angel of God*, and an *Angel*, *Exod. xiv. 19. Chap. xxiv. 20, 23. Numb. xx. 16.* Now this *Angel* is not only called *Lord* (*Jehovah*) which is an incommunicable Name of God, the Glory of which he will not give to another; but, 2. besides this, there are such Things said of this *Angel*, as could be truly said of no other, but the one only living and true God; as, that the *Lord's* (*Jehovah's*) Name was in him; that he was their Judge, forgiveness of Sins belonging to him; that obeying his Voice, was doing all that the *Lord* (*Jehovah*) spake; that God's Presence was in him; that he redeemed from all Evil, and was worshipped, *Exod. xxiii. 21, 22. Chap. xxxiii. 2, 3, 14. Gen. xlviii. 16.* So that this *Angel* was the most high God; and seeing God, in the Person of the Father, is never called an *Angel*, nor, indeed, can be; nor is the Spirit ever so-called, that I can find; therefore it necessarily follows, that this *Angel* was the second Person in the sacred Trinity, the Son of God, the *Lord Jesus Christ*: And he, indeed, is called the *Messenger* or *Angel of the Covenant*, *Mal. iii. 1, 2.* The *Lord* (*Jehovah*) who gave the Law to *Moses*, was seen and talk'd with Face to Face: He appeared in an human Shape, and spake to *Moses* Face to Face, as a Man speaketh unto his Friend. And who should this be but the Son of God, who was to assume the human Nature, and become very Man? Besides, it is expressly said, *Not that any Man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father*, *John vi. 46.* God, in the Person of the Father, is never said to appear. *Christ Jesus* was the appearing *Jehovah*; and as he did appear to give the Law, so he will appear to judge by the Law, *2 Tim. iv. 1, 3.* 'Tis certain it was *Jesus Christ* that gave the Law to *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, because
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it was *his Voice that then shook the Earth*, Heb. xii. 26. Hence it is evident, that those Words in my Text, *God hath, in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son*, do not mean that *Christ*, the Son of God, neither gave the Law, nor any Prophecy, in the Old Testament Times, for he did both ; but they mean, that God, in these last Days, hath spoken unto us *by or in his Son, as manifest in the Flesh*, in or by the Son, *as he was Man*. God hath spoken to us by the personal Ministry of the Man *Christ Jesus* ; and this should abundantly endear to us the Doctrine of the Gospel, that God hath spoken it to us by his own dear Son, who is God-man in one Person.

The Words of my Text being opened, I now come to the great Truth that is plainly held out to us in them.

DOCT. *That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the very Word of God ;* what God himself immediately spoke. By the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, I understand the Writings of the *Prophets* and *Apostles* in the former and latter Part of the *Bible* ; from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of *Malachi*, and from the Beginning of the first Chapter of the Gospel of *Matthew*, to the last Chapter of the *Revelation* of *John* inclusive. These are the Word of God, not the *essential* or *personal* Word of God, for that is *Christ* ; that Word is he who is with God, and is God ; but the *written* Word, the promulged, declared Word, the Word or Words that are expressed in the *Bible* : All these were spoken by God ; *πᾶσα γραφή* is *θεοπνευστή*, that is, *all the Writing*, or all the written Word, is *by the Inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. There is not one Sentence, or Word, in all the *Bible*, but what the Lord told his *Prophets* and *Apostles* to write down there. Whatever is deliver'd in any Part, either of the Old or New Testament, though said by others, and wickedly

wickedly spoken by wicked Persons; yet it was by God's Appointment and Order to be recorded for our Use. All doctrinal Truths, all Commands, Prophecies, Promises, Histories, or whatever else is in the Holy Scriptures, were all spoken by the *Lord God* himself, in the *Prophets, Apostles, and his Son*. That the Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God, is so clear a Truth, and so often told us in the Scriptures, that it is astonishing how any Person, in all the World, that reads and values the *Bible*, can or dare deny it. But, because Men are thus daring, some through Error, and some through Wickedness, and some through both; I shall therefore prove the Point, and then apply it.

I. I shall prove this great Point, or give you some Arguments, shewing, that the Holy Scriptures are *the very Word of God*.

ARG. I. *Because there are many great and glorious Truths revealed in them, which do far exceed the utmost Comprehension of all created Understanding; Truths too great to be contained in the shallow Capacity of any Creature; too high for the human or angelick Mind fully to conceive of; and therefore not revealed by them. God, or an eternal infinite Spirit, is clearly described in the Holy Scriptures; and who can perfectly describe God but himself? All that true and adequate Account we have of God in the Bible, must be told us by himself; for it is utterly impossible any other could do it; for every Being distinct from God, is a created finite Being, and therefore cannot take in, or fully understand an infinite Being, and consequently could not describe him. I am that I am; from everlasting to everlasting thou art God; the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither Shadow of turning; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty: These, and such-like Expressions, if they signify any Thing more than*

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a finite created Being ; if they hold out to us the Nature and Perfection of God, as certainly they do ; then they could never be the Invention of Men or Angels, who are but of finite Understanding.

Every Attribute in God is *absolutely* incomprehensible by the most capacious created Mind. The utmost Thought of Men and Angels cannot find out the Almighty to Perfection. God's Life, Light, Holiness, Goodness, Omnipresence, Omniscience, infinitely exceed the farthest Stretch of all created Imagination. No Creature whatever can describe the Knowledge of the Lord ; for his Understanding is infinite. The Love of God passeth all our Knowledge ; and who knows the Power of his Anger ? God's Eternity we cannot understand, for we cannot conceive of a Being that never began to be. How the divine Will abides unchangeable amidst all the Changes of his providential Transactions in the World, we cannot tell ; yet we are sure, that how great, and how many soever Turns and Changes there are in the World, *God is the Lord who changes not.*

These three, the Father, Word or Son, and Holy Ghost, are expressly said, in Scripture, to be one ; but how they are so, we know not. That the Father should be God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and yet not three Gods, but only one God, is above all finite Capacity fully to understand. None can declare *Christ's* Generation ; no Man knoweth his Name, and therefore no Creature whatsoever could describe him, as he is described in the Scripture.

God manifest in the Flesh is above all created Thought fully to comprehend. How he who is eternal, uncreated, infinite, and immortal, should be made or become Flesh, which is temporal, created, finite, and mortal, is too wonderful for us to know. That Question,

tion, *How does all the Fulness of the Godhead dwell bodily in Christ?* is too hard for Men or Angels to answer exactly. This is the great Mystery of Godliness, that the strongest created Reason, or Understanding, could neither invent, nor can comprehend; yet it is plainly and expressly reveal'd, and therefore revealed only by God himself.

How *Christ* by his own Blood obtained eternal Redemption for us, and hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us, is what we cannot unravel. Full Satisfaction to God for all the Sins of his *Elect* by the Death of *Christ*, is a most sweet, but a mysterious Truth.

Union of Believers with *Christ* is a Mystery: How Believers abide in *Christ*, and *Christ* in them, we know not.

Regeneration, or being born again of the Holy Spirit, is above our Knowledge, and well it may; for we know not how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; how then should we know the more wonderful Work of God, making all Things new in the Soul? What it is to have *Christ* formed in us, the *Holy Spirit* dwelling in us, to be a new Man, renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created us, we cannot tell. Justification by the free Grace of God, through the Redemption that is in *Christ*; Fellowship or Communion with God; are great and glorious Privileges, such as Believers enjoy and feel, but cannot fully apprehend.

The Resurrection of the same Body is quite beyond the Fathom of human Understanding. How this corruptible shall put on Incorruption; and this mortal, Immortality, we know not, nor could it ever have enter'd our Thoughts that it should, had not God revealed it. Now it cannot be deny'd, but all these great Truths are clearly laid down in the *Bible*; they are the very Contents of it, and the most *mate-*

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rial and substantial Things in it ; and though they are what Creatures cannot fully comprehend, and therefore could not invent (*for that which naturally cannot enter into the Mind of Man, cannot naturally proceed out of * it*) yet they are there ; and are some of those Things which are the very Heart and Marrow of the Gospel, and therefore must needs be God's Revelation.

ARG. 2. The holy Scriptures must needs be God's Word, *because there are such Things discover'd to us in them, as the most penetrating Understanding, and quickest Invention amongst Creatures, could never find out, never invent.*

As, 1. *The Rise, and the Evil of Sin.* Whence all our evil Thoughts, and actual Transgressions originally flow ; what it is that works in us all manner of Concupiscence, and puts us on to do what we would not ; we could never find out without the holy Scriptures : But these tell us plainly, *That we have all sinned in that one Man, by whom Sin entered into the World ; and that by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners,* Rom. v. 12, 19. The Light of Nature, or natural Conscience, ever since the Fall of Man, does but witness to part of God's Law, for it is dark and defiled ; it cannot discover all Sin : The Apostle is very clear in this, for, says he, *I* (that is he with all his natural Light and Skill) *had not known Lust, or Concupiscence,* except the Law had said, *Thou shalt not covet,* Rom. vii. 7. So that it is the Law of God that discovers the first Motions and Inclinations to Sin in the Soul to be Sin. No Man upon Earth can find out the first Rise, or utmost Evil of Sin, without the holy Scriptures, *For without the Law Sin is dead.*

Nor, 2. Could ever Men or Angels have found out a Remedy for this desperate Disease, Sin ; or, how-

* Dr. Bates's Works, Page 593. the former Edition.

ever, not such a *Remedy* or *Saviour* as is offered to us in the *Bible*; to wit, *The Blood of him* who is God; the Death of him who is the *Lord* of Life and Glory; *One who is both God and Man in one Person*. Whether ever God would heal any, of this most malignant Distemper, Sin, or no, we could not certainly tell. Bare Reason can never assure us, that there is Forgiveness with God for Sinners; for what Reason can we give, that God will forgive Sin, while his infinite Justice is unsatisfy'd for Sin? Besides, Forgiveness is not a necessary, but a *free Act* of the Divine Mind; and therefore impossible to be known to us, but by his own Revelation; and blessed be God for ever, for that blessed Revelation, *That there is Forgiveness with him*, Psal. cxxx. 4. But how this should come to pass we could not imagine. It is utterly impossible, that either Men or *Angels* should ever have invented, or so much as thought of such a Saviour as is provided. How could they think, 1. That a *pure Virgin*, who had never known Man, should be with Child, and bring forth a Son by the *over-shadowing Power of the Holy Ghost*? 2. That this Son should be derived from *Adam*, partake of the Nature that sinned, and yet be born an holy Thing, without Guilt and Filth? 3. That this *Child* should also be the *mighty God*; both true and perfect God, and true and perfect Man in one Person? 4. That this Child should die the cursed Death of the Cross in the *Room* and *Stead* of others, rise again from the Dead on the third Day, ascend into Heaven, sit at God the Father's right Hand, make continual Intercession for others there, and bring Millions upon Millions to eternal Blessedness? All these Things are quite above the Inventions of the most wise Creatures that ever were made, and therefore must needs be the Effect of infinite Wisdom. Whatever therefore is spoken either in the Old or New Testament of
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Jesus Christ, as God-Man in one Person; or, as he is the only Saviour of Sinners, was certainly spoken by the great God himself.

Nor, 3. Could we ever have invented, or found the Way of coming to Christ. This Way has these two Steps in it at least; God the Father's drawing, and our own believing. Now 'tis plain, proud Man would never have thought of God the Father's drawing him to *Christ*; for this is what he scorns; this Doctrine is the very Thing that drives Man from *Christ*; for when *Christ* said unto his Disciples, *No Man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*; and again, *No Man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father; from that Time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him*, John vi. 44, 65, 66. And as to believing in Christ, our Hearts are naturally set against this; that is as true still of every unconverted natural Man, as it ever was of the *Jews*, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have Life*, John v. 40. We are all by Nature dead in Trespasses and Sins, and Children of Wrath, and cannot believe unto Salvation of our selves. Faith in *Jesus Christ* is a Principle above all the Powers of Nature, and therefore not only to be revealed by God to us as our Duty, but also given us by him. Now the *Bible*, which reveals these Things, that neither Men nor Angels could invent, is surely God's Word.

ARG. 3. The holy Scriptures must needs be God's Word, or Revelation, *because they contain the Counsel of his Will*. If there be any Thing of the Will and Mind of God in them, any Thing of the *eternal Purpose* of the Lord concerning the Salvation of Sinners, or any Thing else, it must needs be God's own Revelation; for it is utterly impossible that any Creature could know the *eternal Purpose* of God, till God made it known to him. We have just so much, and
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no more, of God's holy Will revealed to us, as he pleased; and just when, and not before, he thought fit: Hence it is said, that *the Fellowship of the Mystery hath from the beginning of the World been hid; hid, Where? In God, Eph. iii. 9.* And there it was kept *hid*, and secret, just as long as the *Lord* pleased; but now is *made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, Rom. xvi. 26.* It is altogether absurd and ridiculous to tell of any Thing of God's Will and Mind to be in the Scriptures, and yet not spoken or revealed by himself. To say the Word of God is not contain'd in the *Bible*, is the same as to say, there is nothing of God's Will revealed there, either concerning himself, or his Creatures. And, how false and impious would such a Saying be? For, how full of the Will of God is the *Bible*? Nay, what other is the *Bible*, but a glorious Transcript of the eternal Mind? What, but the Records of Heaven opened to us? A Display of the manifold Wisdom of God, *according to the eternal Purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord?* Or, the Mystery of his Will, which he hath purposed in himself made known to us? What is the *Bible*, but a Declaration of God's Will concerning himself, his Son, his Spirit, his Decree, his Grace, his Worship, his Ordinances, and his Providence, in the World? What, but a Revelation of God's holy Will, concerning what we are to believe and do, and how he will enable us thereto, help us therein, reward the Saints, and punish Sinners at last? And, as the *Bible* is the Will of God, it must needs be the Word of God. God's Will must certainly be God's Revelation, when made known to us. 'Tis evident to a Demonstration, that Men must either deny, that the holy Scriptures are the Will of God, or acknowledge, that

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that they are his Revelation. The whole Will of God in the *Bible*, whether it be the divine *Law*, or the everlasting *Gospel* of *Christ*, is all God's Word. The *Law* is the *Law* of the *Lord*, and expressly so called, and we must own it to be so, if we own it to be his Will. It is the eternal Rule of Well-doing, and therefore given by no Creature. The *Gospel* is expressly called *the glorious Gospel of God*, 1 Tim. i. 11. And, the *Word of the Lord that endureth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 25. The whole Method of Man's Salvation by *Christ* must needs be the Will of God; for none but God could give the Son of God to die for the Sins of Men. None could possibly will or think of such a Way of Salvation but the *Lord*. *Christ* himself tells us, he came to do the Will of God. And 'tis expressly said, that *he gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World, according to the Will of God, and our Father*, Gal. i. 4. And therefore all that is said of *Christ* in the holy *Bible*, as to his Natures, Offices, Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Session at the Father's right Hand, Intercession, and eternal Salvation of his People (and these Things take up a great part of the *Bible*) is God's Word, and could possibly be no other, because all these Things are the result of the eternal Counsel of God. That ever there should be a Saviour of Sinners, or who he should be, or what he should do or suffer, none could tell, till God made it known, it being all purely of his own good Pleasure. Whatever is said in the holy Scriptures, concerning the Holy Spirit of God, either as to his Nature, or his Work upon the Souls of Men, either as their Sanctifier, Comforter, or Guide, must be said by God himself; for no Creature could say any Thing about it, till God inform'd him of it. The *Bible* thus containing the Will of God, is undoubtedly the Revelation of God.

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ARG. 4. The holy Scriptures are the Word of God, because the Prophets and Apostles expressly declare, that what is written therein is the Word of the Lord, or what was spoken or inspired by him. Some Hundreds of Times it is said by the Prophets and Apostles, Thus saith the Lord; or, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; the Word of the Lord came unto me; the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; the Lord spake; Jesus answered and said; or Words of this import. The Apostle Paul tells us expressly, That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, 1 Tim. iii. 16. And says he, When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, 1 Theff. ii. 13. So that if we will allow that the Prophets and Apostles were honest Men, and did speak the Truth in this Matter, we cannot deny the Scriptures to be the Word of God. The ten Commandments were immediately by the Lord delivered to Moses in the Hearing of the People, and they are expressly said to be the Words which God spake, Exod. xx. 1. And they are set off with this very great and sweet Encouragement to obey them, *I am the Lord thy God.* And the first of these Commandments runs in these Words, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;* which, surely, no Creature whatever durst say. And other Commands, such as, *Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart. Fear God and keep his Commandments. Repent and believe the Gospel. Believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* And, *Love one another;* and such like Commands, are all back'd with such great and gracious Motives and Arguments, as none but God could possibly propose, or ever make good.

Besides, if we consider the vast Extent of Scripture Commands, as reaching to, and binding all Mankind, we must say, they are from God; for who but God can command all the World? Scripture

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ture Commands call for the Heart, yea, the whole Heart; and who but God can do that? God only is Judge of the Conscience, and therefore he only can command it. If Scripture Commands are not God's Commands, where are God's Commands? Or, why do we obey these? Many, very many great and precious Promises there are in the *Bible*, which are all expressly called the Word of God, or declared to be what he said. The blessed Promises of a new Heart, a new Spirit; of putting the Lord's Spirit within us, causing us to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgments, and do them; the Prophet Ezekiel brings in under, *Thus saith the Lord*, Ezek. xxxvi. 22, &c. That noble Promise, Of an everlasting Covenant, the Prophet Jeremiah tells us, is what the Lord said, Jer. xxxii. 36, &c. That admirable Promise of Protection in all Dangers, which we have, Isa. xliii. 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. that Prophet tells us, was what the Lord, that created Jacob, said.

These, and all such-like Promises, must needs be God's Word: 1. Because it is not credible that any Creature durst make them; or durst say, *Ye shall be my People, and I will be your God*. 2. None but God can perform them. And therefore, 3. If God did not make them, they are vain and empty Words, and worse.

In the *Bible* there is many an awful Threatning, which comes under, *Thus saith the Lord*; and other Threatnings and Judgments, such as none but God can inflict, or could ever so much as have thought of; such as, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins. If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha. The Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men. Who-so-ever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, neither in the World to come. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire,*
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prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Hence 'tis evident, that if the Scripture be what it declares it self to be; and if its Commands, Promises, and Threatnings, have any Force or Efficacy, or Truth in them; it is most certainly the Word of God.

ARG. 5. *Prophecies, in the Holy Scriptures, or foretelling Things to come, prove them to be the Word of God.*

The Spirit of Prophecy breathing in many Scriptures, and the exact Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, are a demonstrative Argument that they are from God. Surely, the Gift of Prophecy is from God, *the Father of Lights, from whom comes every good and perfect Gift.* This is given us as a distinguishing Character of the true God, *Declaring, or shewing Things to come,* Isa. xli. 22, 23. So that none can foretel Things that are to come, but God, or those Persons to whom God tells these Things. All certain and infallible Knowledge of such future Things as depend on free Causes, is from God alone. Events foretold some Hundreds of Years before they had any visible Root out of which they were to grow, could only be told by infinite Wisdom; only by him who knows all Things past, present, and to come. It is true, some Creatures may accidentally hit upon a future Event; or, so far as it depends upon natural Causes, they may make shrewd Guesses that such a Thing will come to pass, and it may do so; but all this is but Guess, uncertain and dubious. But the great and extraordinary Events foretold in the Scriptures, are evidently above all Creature Foresight. Who but God could promise *the Seed of the Woman*, or Christ Jesus, to *Adam*, four Thousand Years before he was born? Who but God could assure *Abraham*, that his Seed should be afflicted four Hundred Years in a strange Land; which fell out exactly? Who could make such a clear Discovery to *holy David*, of God's Son, as is in *Psal. ii.* but God

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himself. How clearly and particularly did the noble Prophet *Isaiab* foretel the Birth, Life, Sufferings and Death of a blessed *Jesus*, hundreds of Years before *Christ* was born of a Woman? and, who could do this but God himself?

That rich and clear Prophecy in *Isa. vii. 14. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel*; in the plain, obvious, and literal Sense of it, was fulfill'd in *Jesus of Nazareth*, and could possibly be fulfill'd in no other. Nor can I think that it has any typical Sense in it at all; to me it does not appear to be either probable or possible, that there could be a *Type* of the Person here spoken of; 1. Because between the *Type* and the *Antitype* there ought to be an *Agreement* or Likeness in the principal Things; but there never could be, in the Nature of Things, the least Resemblance or Similitude of the main Things here spoken of; and in all God's Word we find not the Birth of a Child born of a Woman that never knew Man, but one. 2. If we take the Words *typically*, then, unless the typical Son was born of a Virgin, or a young Woman that never was known by Man, we have no clear or full Proof in all the Old Testament, that the *Messiah* ought to be born of a *pure Virgin*; and so we do not only lose the plain Sense of the Prophecy, but the Application that the Evangelist *Matthew* makes of it is altogether groundless; which no Christian can think of without Abhorrence. 3. What is said in this Prophecy is true only of *Jesus of Nazareth*, and of none but him; for *he only* was born of a Virgin that never knew Man; and he only was, and is our *Immanuel*; the proper Signification of which Word can be ascribed to no mere Creature whatever, nor ever is ascribed to any mere Creature in all the Scriptures. The Prophecies of the Time and Place of *Christ's* Birth; of his Death, and the Manner of it; of his Resur-

Resurrection and Ascension ; of the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, and Rejection of the *Jews*, together with other Prophecies, are so very many, and so interwoven in the Holy Scriptures, from one End to the other ; and being either expressly said to be from God, or evidently appearing to be so from their Nature ; that they are, and must needs be, an assured Proof, that the Holy Scriptures are of divine Inspiration.

ARG. 6. The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, *because such Things are said of them, as could be truly said of no Word or Writing whatever, but that which is God's.* It is expressly said of the Holy Scriptures, that *they are able to make wise unto Salvation through Faith, which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. and surely then the Wisdom that shines in them must needs be the Wisdom of God ; for we can be made wise unto Salvation by no other Wisdom but his ; as is evident, in that God, in bringing about our Salvation, makes foolish the Wisdom of this World, and shews and magnifies his own in the wonderful Way of Salvation, by a crucified Christ : Neither can we imagine, that God would, by his Apostles, join, as he does here, *Faith in Christ* with any Writing but his own ; because Faith in Christ must *not stand in the Wisdom of Men*, but in the *Power of God*. The Gospel of Christ is expressly called the *Power of God unto Salvation* ; and so powerful and efficacious is it, that it has been victorious in all the World, conquering Thousands upon Thousands where-ever it has gone. The Power that God puts forth in and with the Gospel, penetrates the inmost Recesses of the Soul, separates the Sinner from his dearest Lusts, and gives a new and an holy Bias even to that very Heart that has been accustomed to Evil. The Gospel is called the Gospel of our Salvation, and holds out to us that Salvation, which if we neglect,

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lect, we cannot possible escape, *Heb. ii. 3.* And whose Word but the Word of God can hold out Salvation to us? Or whose is that Word but God's, upon the Neglect of which we run the Risque of eternal Condemnation? The Word, contained in the Holy Scriptures, is said to be, *that Light, a great Light, a marvellous Light, and a Light that shineth in a dark Place until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in our Hearts.* The Light of the glorions Gospel is so glorious, that it is hid to none but those who are lost, *whose Minds the God of this World has blinded,* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. The Gospel is called expressly, *The Gospel of the blessed God, the glorious Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, and of the Grace of God; that Gospel by which we come to be Partakers of the Promise of God in Christ, that Gospel through which Jesus Christ hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, besides which there is no other; and concerning which the Apostle Paul says, once and again, If any Man preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed; and this is the Gospel that must be preach'd and obey'd, upon Pain of everlasting Destruction: And these are such Characters, as can belong to no Word but God's; and therefore the Holy Scriptures, of which these Things are said, are the Word of God.*

Again, *Our Fellowship must be in the Gospel, our Conversation such as becometh the Gospel, we must strive together for the Faith of the Gospel, and not be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel; and can this Gospel then be any but God's? Scripture Words are Words of Truth and Uprightness, Words whereby we shall be judged at the last Day: He that keepeth the Law is happy, but whoso despiseth it shall be destroyed. Scripture Words must not be added to, nor taken away from; to them we must make our Appeal for a final Determination of all religious Controversies: And to*
whose

whose Word should we appeal for such a Determination, but God's, who is Judge of all?

ARG. 7. *If the Author of the Scriptures was a Creature only, and not the most high God, then certainly he was the wickedest Creature that ever lived; none could possibly be a more impudent and abominable Sinner than he: For his Design must be to impose a Cheat upon all Mankind, and that in the most important Concern of eternal Salvation: His Aim must be to cheat Souls into Hell, to decoy them into everlasting Woe and Misery; when he delivers that for the Word of God, and expressly declares, Thus saith the Lord, when he knew that the Lord never said any such Thing. And what more abominable! To feign a divine Revelation, when there was none; to declare a Method of Salvation for Sinners, as God's Method, when there never was any such Thing proposed by the Lord; what more heinously wicked! If the Religion in the Bible is not from God, then it is a forged Thing, and Falshood all over, and the Bible is the most dangerous Book that ever was writ; for it comes to us in God's Name, as what was spoken and inspired by him, and yet upon this Supposition is not so. Nay, the Author of the Holy Scriptures, if he was not God, has not only imposed a false Religion upon the World with a Lye, but he has done this in a most daring Manner; in such a Way, as the most profligate and vile Follow upon Earth would have been ashamed of; for he has taken upon him not only to speak in God's Name, but also declares himself to be God, yea, that God besides whom there is no other; for so he called himself, who spake by the Prophets of old, *Isai. xlv. 5.* It is plain, from what we find in the Scriptures, that no Creature whatever is, or could possibly be the Author of them, as I have shewn, in *Arg. 1 and 2.**

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But further, concerning the good *Angels*: They are said to bow down, *προσκύπτει* *, or *pry* into the glorious Things of the *Gospel*, plainly importing, that they were at a Loss till they did so; they admire such a Revelation, as worthy of an Author infinitely above themselves. It is certain, the manifold Wisdom of God, shining in the great Things the *Gospel* treats of, was unknown to the glorious *Angels*, till God revealed it to them, *Eph.* iii. 10. As to the Devil, or evil *Angels*, he would never have told of himself what is expressly said of him in the Scripture, to wit, *That he was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him; when he speaketh a Lye, he speaketh of his own; for he is a Liar, and the Father of it,* *John* viii. 44. He would never have told us, that *everlasting Fire is prepared for him and his Angels*. As to bad Men, their dark Heads could not, and their wicked Hearts would not, set about composing such a Book of *Light and Truth, and Holiness*, as the *Bible* is: There are so many *black Characters* of wicked Men, such terrible Threatnings against them, and such horrible Things said to be in store for them, that they could never have an Hand in it; nay, their constant Practice is a constant Demonstration against them, how ill they like the *Bible*. And good Men would never have promised what they could never perform, to wit, *Pardon of Sin, new Hearts, God's Holy Spirit, eternal Life*: They would never have said, they spake in *God's Name*, when they did not; so that it is altogether inconsistent with common Sense, that either the Devil, or bad or good Men, should be the Authors of the *Holy Bible*; and the good *Angels* came to their Knowledge of the Mystery of the *Gospel* by the Church

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

of God; therefore I conclude, that God, and he only, is the Author of the *Holy Bible*.

ARG. 8. If the Scriptures are not the Word of God, then *they are no infallible Rule of Faith and Manners, no Rule of divine Obedience to us at all.* They are no perfect, no certain Guide of Life; for Imperfection and Uncertainty accompany every Writing but God's. If they be not God's Word, they are but a fallible Word, and may deceive and ruin us for ever: We are no more to believe the Scriptures, or take them for our unerring Rule; we are no more to depend upon them, as a sure Guide to eternal Happiness, if they are not God's Word. The *Bible* may, nay, it must be thrown away, as a Book not only altogether insufficient to shew us our Way to Heaven, but as containing a great many profane Things in it, if it be not the Word that God himself has spoken to us: But God having spoken it, it is infallibly true all over. God is the only infallible Teacher; it is only he, who cannot lye, who cannot deceive. There is no certainty at all in what Man says, while he speaks without a *Rule* from God, or not according to the *Will of God*: None but God can tell us what we must *believe* and *do*, that we may be saved: None but *he* can shew us what it is to be holy, just, and good, in *such* a Sense, as will please him. God only can tell us how he will be worshipped.

And if he has not told us these Things in the *Bible*, he has told us them no where; for there is no other Book that pretends to be immediately from God, but this; and consequently we have no *divine* Rule of Faith and Manners at all: God has then left us to our selves, to the Devices of our own Hearts; and *he that trusteth in his own Heart is a Fool*, Prov. xxviii. 28. But, on the other hand, if the Holy Scriptures be a *perfect, infallible* Rule of Life, of believing and doing, as certainly they are, and recom-

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mended to us *as such* by the *Lord* himself, then they are his Word ; for they can only become the Foundation of our Faith, Hope, and Obedience to God, *as they are the Mind and Will of God.* And thus it is ; the *Lord*, by his Prophet, recommends the Scriptures to us *as such a Rule*, as whoever speaks not according to it, it is because *they have no Light in them*, *Hai. viii. 20.* Whatever any one speaks, let him be who he will, or say what he will, if he speaks any thing concerning God, or our Duty to him, he must speak *according to the Law and Testimony.* These are the unalterable *Standard* of all right speaking whatever ; *Ye*, says Christ, *do err, not knowing the Scriptures*, *Matt. xxii. 29.* plainly importing, that the Scriptures are an *unerring Rule*, and to be known and believed, that we may not *err* : They are a sure Preservative from Error. The Reason why the *Jewish* People of old did always err in their Hearts, was, because *they did not hear God's Voice*, *Heb. iii. 7, 10.* When one asked our Saviour, and said, *Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal Life ?* Christ turns him to the Scriptures, and said unto him, *What is written in the Law ? How readest thou ?* *Luke x. 25, 26.* So that the Scriptures are our Rule to direct us to God, and to eternal Life and Happiness through *Christ*. And a most excellent Rule they are : They are a divine infallible Rule ; a most true, certain, pure, and perfect Rule ; a Rule that hath no Error in it at all, but all necessary Truth ; a Rule that contains all Things that have been, are, or ever shall be necessary to the Salvation of Men ; a Rule that forbids all Sin, and all the Degrees thereof, in Thought, Word, and Deed ; and commands all Holiness in Heart and Life, and that continually. In a Word, the Scriptures are the only perfect and perpetual Canon, Rule, or Measure of all Matters of Religion ;
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that Rule by which all Doctrines, and all Practices whatever, are to be tried and adjusted; and therefore a Rule that could not possibly be made by any other, but him, who is the All-seeing, Heart-searching God, and great Judge of all.

ARG. 9. *God hath confirmed the Holy Scriptures by Miracles*, and therefore they are his Word. It would be blasphemous, as well as absurd, to imagine, that God, who is infinitely wise, holy, true, and good, should exert his extraordinary Power to confirm false Writings. It is utterly impossible that the God of all Truth, and who is Truth it self, should work Miracles to recommend a Falshood; and therefore, as sure as God has sealed Scripture-Doctrine with the miraculous Operations of his own Hands, so sure it is his Doctrine. I find that Divines are commonly agreed, that a Miracle is an Effect above, or contrary to, the ordinary Course of Nature. Dr. Bates says *, *A Miracle is an extraordinary Operation of God in Nature, either in stopping its Course, or in producing some Effects that are above its Laws and Power.* And this is manifest, from those Miracles the Scripture speaks of. Now it is undeniable that God wrought many Miracles in Confirmation of the Scriptures, by the *Prophets* and *Apostles*; yet, I think, that *Jesus Christ* wrought most Miracles of any; and such Miracles, and in such a Manner, as did evidently prove him to be the true *Messiah*, and *very God*. *Christ* opened the Eyes of one born blind, a Thing never heard of before: To the Widow's Son of the City of *Naim*, that was dead, and they were carrying to his Grave, *Christ* did but say, *Young Man, Arise*, and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: Though *Lazarus* had been dead four Days, and buried in a Cave, *Jesus*

* See his Works, Pag. 239. the former Edition.

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did but cry, *Lazarus, come forth*, and he that was dead came forth, bound Hand and Foot, with Grave Clothes. *Jairus's* Daughter, when dead, *Christ* did but take her by the Hand, and said, *Maid arise*, and her Spirit came again, and she arose straightway. Unto the impotent Man, which had an Infirmary Thirty and eight Years, *Jesus* only said, *Rise, take up thy Bed and walk*; and immediately the Man was made whole, and took up his Bed and walked. *Christ* fed and filled five Thousand Men with five Barley Loaves, and two small Fishes, and there were twelve Baskets fill'd with the Fragments that did remain. These, and many more Miracles which *Christ* wrought, some by a Word, some by a Touch, and all by his own Power, just as he pleased, are a sufficient Argument that he came from God, and, that his Doctrine was according to the Will of God.

1. God in the Old Testament look'd on Miracles as a sufficient Evidence to perswade Men to believe, *Exod. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* 2. *Christ* in the New Testament owns the same Thing; he look'd upon Miracles as a clear Proof, that he was the *Messiah* that was promised: For when two of *John's* Disciples came to *Jesus*, and said unto him, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* *Jesus* answered, and said unto them, *Go and shew John those Things which ye do hear and see: The Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, and the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised up, and the Poor have the Gospel preached to them.* As if he had said, You need but tell *John* what I do, and he will readily believe who I am. And *Christ* himself appeal'd to his Works, as a sufficient Evidence that his Father had sent him. 3. About five Thousand Men, when they had seen the Miracles that *Jesus* did, did all at once conclude and say concerning *Christ*, this is of a Truth that Prophet that should come into the World, and were re-

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solved to make him a King, as is plain from *John* vi. 10, 14, 15. With this Argument of Christ's working Miracles many were convinc'd and believed. *Many believed in his (Christ's) Name, when they saw the Miracles which he did,* *John* ii. 23. This was the Argument the chief Priests and Pharisees feared would produce an universal Belief on *Jesus Christ*; say they, *What do we? For this Man doth many Miracles; if we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him,* *John* xi. 47, 48. *Nicodemus*, a Ruler of the *Jews*, was fully convinc'd by the Miracles that *Christ* did, that he was a Teacher come from God, *John* iii. 1, 2. And this Argument is urged by the Apostle *Peter*, as an invincible one, of *Christ's* coming from God, and being approv'd of by God. *Ye Men of Israel*, says he, *bear these Words, Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by Miracles and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your selves also know,* *Acts* ii. 22. The Strength of this Argument is so great and evident, that the Enemies of Christianity labour hard at this Day to overthrow it; and we can expect no other from them. But it is unaccountable, that any who pretend to be Ministers of Christ, and Defenders of the Christian Religion, should endeavour to darken, confound, and steal away the Evidence that arises to Christianity from the Miracles spoken of in the holy Scriptures.

One says, * 'Tis not absolutely certain to us, at this distance of Time, that the Miracles were wrought at all. What, does the Word of God fail, and lose its Efficacy by length of Time? No certainly. Whatever is delivered there as done by Christ, or any other, is, and ever will be, a certain Truth to us, and all succeeding Generations. Undoubtedly all

* *True Grounds and Reasons, &c.* Page 31.

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those who believe the holy Scriptures to be the Word of God, are far more sure that the Miracles of Christ were wrought, than they are, that any Thing they ever read in any human Writing is true; yea, they are as certain of it, as they are that God hath spoke Truth in his Word; or, that the holy Scriptures are Words of Truth and Soberness.

Another, * after he has laid down his sorry Definition of a Miracle, asserts, *that, Even the Actions of God himself will not, upon this (his) Scheme, be miraculous. That we shall find it a very difficult Task to prove, That Miracles are done by the immediate Interposition of God himself. That we ought not too positively to assert, even of the most wonderful Events that have hitherto happened, that they were produced immediately by the Hand of God, and not by the Ministration or Agency of inferior Spirits.* Now, these are high Rants against God himself; plain Contradictions to his Word. The holy Scriptures tell us expressly, that *God did Miracles*; and the Lord himself declares *he did so.* Deut. xi. 3. Chap. xxix. 3. Numb. xiv. 22. In Exod. xv. and, Psal. lxxviii. are several miraculous Works mentioned, and they are all expressly ascribed to God as the Author of them. Besides, I would ask, by whose Power did *Moses's Rod become a Serpent, and a Rod again?* Exod. iv. 3, 4. By whose Power did the Rod of Aaron bring forth Buds, bloom Blossoms, and yield Almonds? Numb. xvii. 8. By whose Power did the Sun stand still upon Gibeon? Josh. x. 12, 14. By whose Power did the Virgin Mary conceive, and bring forth Jesus Christ? Was dead Lazarus rais'd out of his Grave by any, but God's almighty Power? Was not the Miracle of Cloven Tongues immediately from God? Creatures could do no such Things as

* Mr. Sam. Chandler's *Vindication of the Christian Religion*, Pages 18, 28, 29.

these

these by their own Power. Good Men, that were instrumental in, or occasions of, working Miracles, deny'd they wrought them by their own Power, and ascribed the Work to *Christ*, Acts iii. 12, 16. Chap. iv. 10. The *Magicians*, those Deceivers of old, neither did, nor could work any *true* or *real* Miracles; for they could not bring forth Lice, nor any one of the following Miracles; they could not hinder the Plague of *Boils* from breaking forth upon *themselves*; they could not remove *any one* Plague from *Pharaoh*; their Serpents were swallowed up of *Aaron's Rod* or Serpent, and therefore they were not *true* Serpents, but only *Images*, or Serpents in *Shew* and Appearance only. Could but the Devil have done more in, or by these *Magicians*, his Servants, no doubt but he would; but he cannot work a *true* and *real* Miracle; no, no, only *lying Wonders*, these he can do. So that God only is the Author of all *real* Miracles. * *We must learn to give God that which is his own, and due unto him. We must acknowledge him to be the sole Author and Worker of all the Miracles that have been, or shall be in the World. Neither Saint nor Angel, neither Prophet nor Apostle, neither Satan, the Prince of Darknes, nor any of the Devils, is able to work any Miracle; it is the Prerogative Royal of God. Miracles, being only God's Work, are an incontestable Evidence that the Doctrine they are wrought in Confirmation of, is God's Word.*

ARG. 10. Take a *distinct View* of the Old and New Testament, and it will further evidently appear that they are both of them the Word of God.

I. The New Testament is the very Word of God. This is evident, 1. Because the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the *Founder* and *Publisher* of it, is *the One only living and true God*; the very same God the Father and Holy

* Atterfoll upon Numbers, Page 681.

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Spirit are. This is clearly asserted many a Time in the holy Scriptures: It is what cannot possibly be denied, without perverting the most evident Sense of many a *Text* in the *Bible*. There is nothing in all the *Bible* held out to us in clearer Expressions than this great Truth is, *That Christ Jesus is the true God*. This is as evident, as that he is Man; as evident, as that God the Father is God. It cannot be prov'd with better Arguments from the Scripture, that the Father is God, than it can, that the Son is God. * I have elsewhere invited any one to shew if he can, that there is *one* Text in all the *Bible* that does more clearly shew, that the Father is the true God, than the *same* Text, or *some* other, shews, that *Christ* also is the true God. I am fully perswaded none can do it. Every Thing that essentially belongs to God, is attributed in holy Scripture unto *Christ*; all God's Names, Titles, Attributes; yea, and all his Works, and Worship, are all evidently ascribed to *Christ*. Certainly it is as clear from the holy Scriptures, that *Christ* is the *One true God*, the Creator and Preserver of all Things, as that there is any God at all made mention of there. This single Chapter where my *Text* lies, affords us several irresistible Arguments, that *Christ* is the same most High God, essentially consider'd, that God the Father is: For, 1. He is expressly said to be *the Brightness of his Glory*, and the *express Image*, or Character, of his Person, ver. 3. And what can be *before*, *higher*, or *more glorious*, than the *Brightness* of God the Father's Glory? Or, what is the Essence of the Father, if the *Brightness* of his Glory be not? Surely there is no other Form in God but an essential One. One puts a very *diminutive* Sense upon those Words; he says, † *He (Christ)*

* *Preface to my Sermons upon John v. 7.*

† *Mr. Dodson's twelve Discourses, Page 278.*

is, as it were, a bright Ray of the Divine Glory; and that the Son shines forth from the Substance of the Father, as a Ray of Light is said to proceed from the Body of the Sun. Whence it is plain, according to this Notion, that Christ, the Son of God the Father, is not the same Substance or Essence that the Father is, no more than a Ray of Light proceeding from the Body of the Sun, is that Body. But this is perverting the Text, which says expressly, that the Son of God is the Brightness of his Father's Glory: And he who is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, must needs be his express Image or Character, else he is not the Brightness of his Glory; and he who is the express Image or Character of the Father's Person must needs be an absolutely eternal, uncreated, infinite Image. The express Image or Character of God the Father is the very Essence of God the Father. 'Tis utterly impossible to give a true and full Character of God the Father, except we give unto it every Divine Attribute; Christ therefore is the express Image or Character of God the Father, because he has all the Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him. And therefore, 2. Christ is here, ver. 8. expressly called God, & Gods; God with the Article; the true eternal God, whose Throne is for ever and ever. 3. Christ is here called the Son of God the Father: He is the Son of God in an higher Sense than the highest Creatures are, or can be; for he is such a Son as was before all Things, and did create all Things; such a Son as is God's own proper Son, and the mighty God; and this must needs be so, for the proper Son of God must have the Nature of God. 4. The great Work of Creation is here expressly ascribed to Christ the Son of God. To the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever — And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thine Hands, ver. 8, 10. These Words are a most clear

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Proof that *Christ* the Son of God is the *immediate* and *proper* Creator of the Earth, and the Heavens. Creation is never more directly, or properly attributed to the Father than it is here to the Son: Here is not one Word or Syllable to ground that vile Notion on, that the Son of God is only an *Instrument* in the Creation; but the Words are full and express for his being the *proper* and *alone* Creator, and he who is so is *Jehovah*, the God of Israel, as is evident from the 102d *Psalms*, whence these Words were taken. 5. *Christ* the Son of God is to be worshipped. And let all the *Angels of God* worship him, ver. 6. Now it is clear from the Holy Scriptures, that God only is to be worshipped with religious Worship; *Matth.* iv. 10. *Exod.* xx. 3. *Deut.* xiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. therefore *Christ* is the One only living and true God. And this is, and must be own'd to be, as clear a Truth, as any in the *Bible*, while the first Chapter of *Hebrews* is reckon'd any part of God's Word. And hereupon it is most evident, that *Christ* the Son of God had a full Right to make a New Testament, or to give us a second Edition of the Will and Mind of God concerning the Salvation of Sinners; to change the Worship of God from legal and ceremonial, into pure evangelical; he himself being the *most high God*. His *true eternal Godhead* is his *Claim* to give us a *Gospel Dispensation*. There can be no better, no higher, no other Claim, to an Authority and Power of giving a Rule of Life, of Faith and Manners, to reasonable Creatures, than this, that he is the *true God* who does so. Now *Christ* is the One true God, and therefore he had the *best* and the *only* Right to bring in a New Testament Dispensation; and he being the Author of the New Testament, it is every Word of it God's Word. What *Christ* has said there, every Sermon he preached, every Doctrine he delivered, every Command he

he has there given, are all the Word of God, because *Christ himself is God.* 2. All that the *Evangelists and Apostles* have said in the New Testament is the Word of God; because, *They all were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance,* Acts ii. 4. Chap. iv. 31. And our Saviour said expressly to his Disciples, *It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* The Apostle Paul says, *Ye know what Commandments we (the Apostles) gave you by the Lord Jesus Christ;* and, *he therefore that despiseth, despiseth not Man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,* 1 Thes. iv. 2, 8. The Holy Ghost dwelt in the *Apostles,* 2 Tim. i. 14. And they all spake what the Spirit taught them to speak; his Dictates they faithfully delivered. Luke tells us expressly, that he had perfect Understanding of all Things, ~~another~~, that is, *from above, from Heaven,* Luke i. 3. John tells us, he received his Message from Christ, 1 John i. 3, 5. Paul expressly says, *that he was an Apostle, not of Men, neither by Man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,* Gal. i. 1. And certifies, that the Gospel he preached, *was not after Man;* for, says he, *I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ,* Gal. i. 11, 12. The Things that he writ to the *Corinthians* he declares, were revealed to him by the Spirit of God, and were the Commandments of the Lord. It is true, the Apostle Paul says, *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord;* and concerning Virgins, *I have no Commandment from the Lord,* 1 Cor. vii. 12, 25. And also he says, *that which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord.* Now to understand this aright, we must consider, 1. That Paul owns, that in these Things *he had the Spirit of God;* and, that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles; that the Truth of Christ was in him; and, from the beginning of both these Epi-

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files 'tis evident, that *Paul* writ to the Church of God at *Corinth* as an *Apostle* of *Jesus Christ*. 2. His saying he spake, and not the Lord, and that he spake not after the Lord, probably means, that there was no Commandment delivered by the Lord in that matter. To the rest speak I, by *immediate* Revelation; and not the Lord by any *express* Command before given; as he says concerning Virgins, *I have no Commandment of the Lord*; that is, no Precept laid down in holy Writ to speak by, or according to, in this Matter; I speak *immediately* from the Lord, as one who has the Mind of *Christ*. So that all the New Testament being spoken by *Christ*, and his Spirit in the Apostles, it is all of it the Word of *Christ*; pure Canonical Scripture, flowing from the infinite Wisdom of God.

2. The Old Testament is the very Word of God. I need not insist much on the Proof of this, it is so evident from many Texts both in the Old and New Testament. God expressly declared to *Moses*; *I will be with thy Mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*, *Exod.* iv. 12. And it is certain God spake all the Words of the Law, *Exod.* xx. 1. Some of the last Words of *David*, the anointed of the God of *Jacob*, were, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Mouth*, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1, 2. And commonly the rest of the Prophets preface what they have said, with, *Thus saith the Lord*. In the New Testament it is said, That the Lord God of *Israel* spake by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began, *Luke* i. 68, 70. It was the Spirit of *Christ* which was in them (the Prophets) and testified before-hand the Sufferings of *Christ*, and the Glory that should follow, 1 *Pet.* i. 11. The Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 *Pet.* i. 21. The Apostle *Paul* quotes the Old Testament as Scripture, *Gal.* iii. 8. Chap.

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iv. 30. And he expressly declares, *That all Scripture is given by the Inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. Christ himself quotes the Old Testament *as Scripture*, as what was *spoken by God*, Matth. xxii. 29, 31, 32. Therefore I conclude, that both the Old and New Testament are the very Word of God.

ARG. II. and last, *The Holy Spirit of God assures Believers, that the holy Scriptures are the very Word of God*, and therefore they are so. He gives a most powerful, over-bearing Testimony to this Truth. He settles and roots it with irresistible Light and Strength in the Minds and Hearts of Believers. *It is the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, that teaches us all Things, and brings all Things to our Remembrance, whatsoever Christ hath said unto us*, John xiv. 26. *The Spirit of Truth guides us into all Truth*, John xvi. 13. Believers have *an Unction from the holy One, and they know all Things, — because he teacheth them all Things, and is Truth, and is no lie*, 1 John ii. 20, 27. When the holy Scriptures come to us not in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, then we know and feel that they are the Word of God indeed. Other Arguments may silence Gainsayers, and effectually non-plus them, that they cannot deny the Scriptures to be from God; but it is only the Spirit of God that can thoroughly work a steady Belief of them. Other Arguments may convince, but 'tis by the Power of God's Spirit *only* that we are converted, and wrought upon to give a *special spiritual* Assent and Consent to this Truth, that the Scriptures are of Divine Inspiration. Other Arguments may solve our Doubts in a great measure, but the Spirit *only* works in us a thorough saving Acquiescence. Other Arguments may draw out our Assent to, and an high Esteem of, the holy Scriptures; but it is from an inward Work of the Spirit of God upon our Souls, that we are *fully* perswaded and assured of the Divine Authority of them.

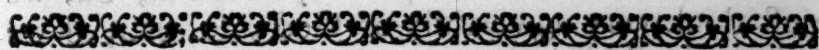
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them. Though God may be seen speaking in the holy Scriptures, yet he is not thereupon always *felt* speaking to the Heart. The Majesty of God in the Scriptures may make the Wicked tremble, and cry out, God is here; but 'tis *only* the Spirit of God that begets in the Soul a Plerophory, or *full Assurance* of this Truth; he *only* drives away all Doubts and Fears, and Wavering; and fills the Mind and Heart with an indubitable Certainty. And this he does, by irradiating and abilitating our Minds to discern spiritually the divine Characters that God has impress'd upon the Scriptures; or, by giving such Force and Efficacy to Scripture Truths, that we feel them breaking in upon our Minds and Hearts with such an all-conquering Power, that they prove themselves to be the mighty Power and Word of God. O that God, by his Holy Spirit, would work a saving Faith in every one of us, and by his Spirit, working in and by that Faith, *fully* assure us all, that the holy Scriptures are the very Word of God! I have chiefly insisted upon the *internal* Arguments, being fully perswaded they are the best Grounds of our believing the Scriptures to be the Word of God. I shall conclude with what a judicious Author says, * *The principal Grounds of our receiving the Bible for the Word of God, are its internal Motives, or Arguments impress'd upon it; nor is the Manner of its Conveyance from Age to Age of so great Import in this Matter as some do imagine. For should we have light on it by chance, or had it dropt out of the Clouds, yet while it carries these Signatures upon it which it doth, we might by the meer Exercise of our rational Faculties, without the Testimonials of any Man or Church, have concluded that it could have proceeded from none but God.*

* Mr. Ferguson's Interest of Reason in Religion, Page 125.



S E R M O N II.



HEBREWS i. 1, 2.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, Hath, in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son —



THE Observation from these Words is this; *That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the very Word of God.* I have given you some of the common Arguments for the Proof of this Truth: It is a Truth of the greatest Importance, and, as you believe or disbelieve it, so you will embrace, and close in with, or slight and reject the Holy Scriptures; and so also you will honour and please, or dishonour and provoke God, the Author of them. May our good God, in the Riches of his Mercy, confirm and establish our Hearts in this great Truth, that the Holy Scriptures are his Word!

I pass on now to the Application. Is this so that the Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God; then,

1. *To be sure there is nothing in them unworthy of God; nothing in them, in the least, dishonourable to an Author of infinite Perfection: There is not a single Sentence, Expression, or Word, in them all, but what well becomes the Glory and Honour of an infinitely great, wise, holy, just, and good God: God's Word is, in every Thing, becoming God himself. This we cannot possibly doubt of, but we must think very unworthily of God; so that, if we believe the Scriptures to be God's Word, as indeed they are, we must, at the same Time, believe, that every Thing in them is decent, holy, possible, true, and delivered for wise and good Ends.*

There neither is, nor possibly can be, an *indecent* or *unholy* Word in the Holy Scriptures; nothing obscene, as base Minds would represent; but those very Things, which, to wanton Persons, seem immodest, are express'd in Words of the greatest Modesty. What vile Wretches must those be that dare attribute *Indecency* to that holy Command of the great God! *Ye shall circumcise the Flesh of your Fore-skin,* Gen. xvii. 11. That which God made a Token of the holy Covenant, between himself and his People, those Persons look on as an unholy Thing; with such *impure* Minds do some Men search the *pure* Word of God. The Tokens of Virginity, and the Law of Jealousies, had these two great Ends in them, no way unbeseeming the great Judge of all, to wit, severe Punishment of the Guilty, and a publick Vindication of the Innocent. Some charge the Scriptures with containing Things that are *absurd* and *impossible*; such as, that *the Sun should stand still*; that *Jonah should live in the Belly of a Fish three Days and three Nights*; that *an Ass should speak*; that a *Virgin should*

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should conceive, and bring forth a Son : but surely none of these Things are, or can be, impossible with God, *with whom all Things are possible*. It is certain, none but God can bring such Things to pass ; and, it is certain, he can : Almighty Power can most easily effect them. He that made the World can put a Stop to the whole Frame of Nature, by a Word of his Mouth, and make the Sun, Moon, and Stars, stand still, where, when, and how long he pleases : It is as easy for God to preserve a Man's Life in a Fish's Belly, as out of it : He that doth whatever he will in Heaven, Earth, and Sea, can open the Mouth of an Ass when he will : To say, that a Virgin, who never knew Man, cannot conceive, and bring forth a Son, by the Power of the Highest, is not only an express Contradiction of the *Angel Gabriel* sent from God, and an Overthrow of the Christian Religion, but is Atheistical.

Though some would charge the Holy Scriptures with *Contradiction*, yet it is certain the Charge is groundless ; there is no Contradiction in them at all : Where there seems to be any Thing of that Nature, it is often, upon a very easy heedful Turn of Thought, reconciled ; and always, upon a more deliberate Consideration, perfectly agreed. It is impossible that God should lye, and therefore impossible he should contradict himself. What, Truth it self deceive ! It cannot. What, a Contradiction in God's Word ! It is Wickedness and Blasphemy to entertain such a Thought. Should we not a thousand Times rather confess our Ignorance and Insufficiency, than ascribe Contradiction to infallible Truth ? When the Scripture says, in one Place, God *repents not*, and, in another, he *does repent* ; the former relates to his *unalterable Decree*, or *Counsel* ; the latter to his *providential Transactions*, which are variable, though he still acts according to his immutable Purpose.

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One Place says, that *Jebojabin* was eight Years old when he began to reign, that is, he then began to *reign together* with his Father ; another Place tells us, he was eighteen Years old when he began to reign, that is, he was so old when he began to *reign alone*, his Father being dead. *Matthew* says, that *Jacob* begat *Joseph*, and so he did ; *Jacob* was *Joseph's* natural Father : *Luke* says, that *Joseph* was the Son of *Heli*, and so he was, to wit, his Son-in-Law, having espoused *Mary*, the natural Daughter of *Heli*. If I bear Witness of my self, says Christ, my Witness is not true, that is, it would not be valid in the Jews Opinion ; though, says he, I bear Record of my self, yet my Record is true, that is, was authentick, because he was the one true God. But the learned *Spanheim** gives full Satisfaction to the most difficult Points in this Case.

And as there is no real Contradiction in all God's Word, so there is not the least *Corruption* in it all ; it is, and shall be, kept pure and uncorrupt to the End of the World. *Moses* tells us, *That secret Things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those Things which are revealed belong unto us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law*, Deut. xxix. 29. So that as long as it is Man's Duty to do all the Words of God's Law, which must needs be as long as there is a Man in the World, so long must revealed Things be continued to us and our Posterity. Our blessed Lord *Jesus* himself expressly tells us, that till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one Tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled, Matt. v. 18. Hence 'tis plain, the Law of God is as firm and as permanent as Heaven or Earth, yea, and more so ; so that it is a most vain, as well as a most wicked Thing, for Men to endeavour to rase out

* *Dub. Evang.*

so much as one *Iota* from God's Law ; it is as easy for them to pluck the Sun out of the Heavens, as one Letter from the Law of God. *Christ*, the great God, has declared, that *his Words shall not pass away*, Matt. xxiv. 35. Besides, *Christ* has promised to *be always, even unto the End of the World*, with those who *teach and observe all Things whatsoever he has commanded*, Matt. xxviii. 20. and therefore all Things whatsoever *Christ* has commanded, shall remain to the End of the World, for the Use of Men. The Apostle *Peter* says, *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever ; and this is the Word, which, by the Gospel, is preached unto you*, 1 Pet. i. 25. And if the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, it must never be corrupted ; because a corrupt Word is not, nor can be, the Word of the Lord : 'Tis a Thought every way unworthy of God, to think that he will suffer his Word to be corrupted. What ! will he, who will not suffer one Hair of our Head to perish, suffer the *Foundation* of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, *Jesus Christ himself* being the chief corner Stone, to be overthrown ? Surely he will not. Will he, who takes Care to feed the Fowls of the Air, not take Care to preserve unto his People their spiritual Food, the Word of Life ? Certainly he will. Do Men take special Care of their last Will and Testament, that not one Word be added, or taken away ? And will God suffer his last Will and Testament to be corrupted, to be added to, or taken from ? This cannot be. To say that God will suffer his Word to be corrupted, is as much as to say, that he is willing to lose his Word, and that it come to nothing ; which none but an *Atheist* will say. To say that it is corrupted only in *smaller* Matters, is to bring the *greatest* Truths in it into Question ; for, if it may be corrupted in small Matters, why not in greater ? Why not in Fundamentals ? Why may one

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Tittle of God's Word be lost? The smallest Matters in it (if any Thing there may be called so) were delivered upon a Design becoming the infinitely great and wise God, and therefore not to be corrupted. This and the other base wicked Fellow may endeavour to corrupt God's Word, and may strike some Sentences or Verses out of *his Bible*: But God's beloved People shall have an *uncorrupted Bible* while the World endures. *Glassius* * asserts and proves, that there is *no Corruption in the Words or Sentences of the Hebrew Text, nor in the Letters or Points either*; and also that the *Greek Text of the New Testament is free from Corruption*. Dr. *Owen* † affirms, *That the whole Word of God, in every Letter and Tittle, as given from him by Inspiration, is preserved without Corruption*. So that it is so far from any one Book of God's Word being lost, that there is not one Word or Letter lost of it all, or ever shall be.

2. Are the Holy Scriptures the Word of God? then *they are to be believed by us purely for their own internal Light, Worth, and Excellency*. They bear their own bright and convincing Evidence in themselves; they themselves fully demonstrate what they are. By their own divine Authority they bind the Consciences of all Men to receive and obey them; their own innate Beauty and Goodness is the most endearing and powerful Argument for our receiving them, as the Word of God: The Holy Scriptures depend upon no Man, nor any Society of Men whatever, for there Authority: All Creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot give a valid Authority to the standing Rule of our Faith and Manners; no, God only

* *Philologia Sacra, de Textus Hebraei, in V. T. & Graeci in N. T. puritate*, Pag. 13, 14, &c. Pag. 173, &c.

† Of the divine Original of the Scripture, Pag. 14.

must do that ; and God's Authority, to wit, *Thus saith the Lord*, is the Authority stampt upon the Holy Scriptures, and therefore they have the highest Authority, and consequently must needs be the most convincing Word that ever was, or can be spoken. If Men will not believe the Scriptures to be God's Word, when God himself says so, 'tis not likely they should believe it, when only Man says so: *They that will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from the Dead*, Luke xvi. 31. It is absurd and blasphemous to assert that the Authority of God's Word dependeth on the Testimony of Man, or that the Scriptures are of no Credit without Man's Approbation and Determination ; for this is to set Man above God ; the Church, the Body, above *Christ*, the Head of the Church ; and to make the Testimony of Creatures more firm and perswasive than the Testimony of our great Creator. If the greatest Light, even a *self-evidencing* Light, be in the Scriptures, as certainly it is, then it is unreasonable to send us to any other Light, whereby to see the divine Authority of them ; for this is to take us from a greater to a lesser Light, that we may see the better. It is not more silly to light a Candle at Noon-Day, to see whether it is the Sun that shines, than it is to seek for a Light from the Creatures to shew us the Authority of God's Word ; seeing that God's own Majesty is illustrious there, the Sun of Glory shines there, and the Spirit of infallible Truth speaks there ; and all other Lights are not so much to the Glory of God shining in his Word, as a Candle is to the Sun. Having God's Testimony *in* and *to* the Holy Scriptures, we need not stay for the Witness of Men, because the Witness of God is infinitely greater : That Writing, which is filled with infallible Truth, as the Holy Scriptures are, must needs be more convincing and per-

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perswasive, than those Writings which are fallible, as all the Writings of the best Men are. We do not receive the Holy Scriptures *as* canonical, because they are received, accepted of, and recommended to us *as such* by Men, but because the Scriptures *themselves* contain and prescribe a Canon or Rule to us of all Faith and Practice *from God himself*.

But is not the Testimony of a Thousand, or more, of those very learned and godly Men, that lived in or near the Time when the New Testament was written, *the best Testimony* we can have for its divine Authority? I answer, no, It is not the *best* Testimony; 1. Because it is but an *human* and *fallible* Testimony; but the Testimony the Scripture bears to it self, or that God in his Word bears to his Word, is a *divine* and *infallible* Testimony. The Voice of ten thousand Men is as nothing to the Voice of God: *Thus saith the Lord*, is infinitely above all, that all Men upon Earth can say. The best of Men can give but an human Testimony to the Word of God, and that is a Testimony quite below the divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and therefore it cannot prove that: An human Testimony can produce nothing but an *human* Faith, which is, in Nature or Kind, distinct from *that Faith*, wherewith God commands us to believe his Word; but the Faith by which we can certainly believe the Holy Scriptures to be the very Word of God, is that *Grace* of Faith which is God's *special* Gift to, and *Work* in, his own People. 2. Those good Men, or even the Church of God herself, must prove their Testimony, both as to the *Truth* and *Goodness* of it, from the Holy Scriptures: They must *to the Law*, and *to the Testimony*, if they would be believed; their very Testimony must be according to this Word, or else it is because they have no light in them,
Isai.

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Isai. viii. 20. And therefore the Scripture Testimony is the *first*, the *bighest*, and the *best* Testimony of all other, because it is that Testimony by which every other Testimony must be tried. Scripture is the *Standard of all Truth*, and consequently of this Truth, that the Holy Scriptures are the *Word of God*: That must needs speak alone for it self which must try the speaking of all. The Churches of Christ may, yea, must, *hold up*, and *hold out*, the *Light* of the *Gospel*, but they can add no divine Ray to its native Glory. It is not the Agreement of the *Learned*, not the Consent of *Fathers*, nor the Determination of *Councils*; but the Scripture it self, or God himself speaking in it, that is the *Ground* of our Faith.

* *There is no Demonstration more sure than the Principle of Faith*; God has declared so, therefore 'tis true: 'Tis injurious to his Honour to require any other Proof of his Word, than his Word. † That God, who is *Prima Veritas*, the first and sovereign Truth, infinitely separated and distinguished from all Creatures, on all Accounts whatever, should write a Book, or, at least, immediately indite it, commanding us to receive it as his, under the Penalty of his eternal Displeasure, and yet that Book not make a sufficient Discovery of it self to be his, to be from him, is past all Belief. || The Authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the Testimony of any Man, or Church, but wholly upon God (who is Truth it self) the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God. Assure yourselves, you will never receive the Holy Scriptures with that Love and Delight you should, nor believe them as

* Dr. Owen's Works, Pag. 83. former Edition.

† Dr. Owen of the divine Original of the Scripture, Pag. 119—120.

|| Assembly's Confession.

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you ought, nor obey them, as you are commanded, unless you receive, believe, and obey them, *as the Word of God.*

3. Are the Holy Scriptures the Word of God? well then may there be *many Things in them, by us incomprehensible*; yet this must not hinder *our steady Belief* of them. We cannot suppose but, in God's Word, God would speak many Things of himself; and this was absolutely necessary, if he would speak any Thing concerning his own Honour, or Man's eternal Salvation by *Christ Jesus*: And what can God say of himself, as he is the great God, but it must be above our Comprehension? Texts of Scripture, that hold out the *Attributes* of God, are as much above our Capacity, as those that speak of his *Personalities*. We know no more *how* God is eternal, or *how* he is every where present *at once*, than we know how the one God is three Persons; and therefore they who will not allow of three Persons in the one Godhead, because they cannot comprehend *how* that should be, must, for the very same Reason, deny that there is *any God at all*, or any Being that is eternal, and infinite; for he can comprehend the one no more than the other. The Works of God are unsearchable, and past finding out; and must we therefore deny that they are spoken of in God's Word? The Lord speaks much of a World in the *Bible*; and does any Man fully know and comprehend every Thing in the World? Who knows what an *Angel* or a *Soul* of Man is? And, because we cannot tell exactly *what* they are, must we deny *that* they are? We know not what Light is, must we therefore deny that the Sun shines? We know not what Motion is, and shall we deny therefore that we ever move? Nay, what one Thing is there that any Man can give a full and perfect Account of, even from the Sun in the Heavens to a Spire of Grass upon Earth?

And

And seeing that even *finite material Things* are unsearchable by us, well may *infinite and spiritual Things* be so; well may God speak above our Comprehension, when he speaks of God manifest in the *Flesh*, of *Reconciliation by the Death of his Son*, of our being begotten of his own Will with the Word of Truth, of our receiving Grace for Grace from Christ's Fulness, and of other great Things belonging to the *spiritual and eternal World*: When there are so many Mysteries in Nature, why may not God speak Mysteries in his Gospel? And if Reason is perfectly non-plust in every Particle of Earth, and Spire of Grass, how comes it to complain of sacred Mysteries? O, what an *unreasonable Thing* is proud *unsanctified Reason*! The Maxims of *Philosophy* are overthrown in the Creation; much more may they be so in our *eternal Redemption by Christ*. What then is the Reason, that Reason should rise up and vent its Anger against *Gospel Mysteries*, and, at the same Time, lie mute, and shew no Resentment at all against Mysteries in Nature? What but because Reason would have no *Christianity* in its Religion? And chuse what proud Reason says against *Gospel Mysteries*, yet we are sure there are such, because God himself has told us so: He has expressly said, *And without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the Flesh*. He tells us also of the *Mysteries of God*, of the *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, the *Mystery of Christ*, and of the *Gospel*; and therefore to deny that there are *Mysteries* in the *Gospel*, or to affirm that Christianity is not mysterious, is to give God the Lye; it is to rise up in direct Contradiction to what God himself has said: But what shall we say? *Unto you it is given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without all these Things are done in Parables*, Mark iv. 11.

H

O then

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O then let us cry and pray to God most earnestly, to enable us to know and believe savingly what we cannot comprehend fully ! Let us exercise *Faith* in Things that are *above* Reason. To believe nothing but what our own Reason can comprehend, is to believe nothing at all of *Gospel Mysteries* ; it is to set up our selves *above* God, and to believe our own *Reason*, rather than the only wise God. Reason is an Instrument in making Inferences and Conclusions, but not the *Ground* of our believing the Truths infer'd : Reason cannot make a Conclusion *to be* the Word of God ; no, it can only help us to *discern* that it is so : Reason can perceive the Regularity of a Conclusion, when it cannot comprehend all that is in the Conclusion ; and therefore we do not believe such or such a Conclusion to be an Article of Faith, because *Reason* has truly deduced it from its Premises, but because *God* has deliver'd it in the Holy Scriptures. The best Thing that Reason can do for us, in this Case, is, to assure us, that it is the most unreasonable Thing in the World not to believe that to be true that God has spoken, though we cannot at all comprehend it. Our not comprehending the great Truths of the *Gospel*, must be no Bar at all to our believing them : *God has spoken them* ; he has deliver'd them in the Holy Scriptures, therefore we must believe them. O that God, in rich Mercy, would give us and encrease in us that noble Grace of Faith, whereby we may stedfastly believe the *glorious Mysteries* of the *Gospel* !

4. Are the Scriptures the Word of God ? then they must be preached on, opened, and expounded to the People. This is what *Christ* did ; *Beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the Things concerning himself*, Luke xxiv. 27. He was anointed to preach the Gospel to the Poor, Deliverance to the Captives, and the acceptable Year
of

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of the Lord: He preached both the Law and the Gospel. The Apostle *Paul* declared, that a *Necessity* was laid upon him; yea, says he, *Wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. ix. 16. And are ordinary Ministers exempt from this Necessity? Surely no. Have they no Fear of this terrible *Wo*, if they neglect to preach the Gospel? Certainly they must, if they have any Fear of God before their Eyes. Let all the Ministers of *Christ* then *preach the Word*, and *be instant in Season, and out of Season*; and now especially, *when Men will not endure sound Doctrine, but, after their own Lusts, heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears*; now, when Men turn away their Ears from the Truth, and are turned unto Fables. What can we preach on? or what will our Preaching signify, if it be not grounded on God's Word? Ministers must not shun to declare all the Counsel of God, and there they have Work enough. God must be preached on in his infinite Nature and personal Properties. God the Father must be preached on, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the first Person in the sacred Trinity, as a Being of infinite Goodness, Mercy, and Love, who sent his dear and only begotten Son into the World, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. *Christ* must be preached on, as the second Person in the sacred Trinity, as God-man in one Person, and as the only Saviour of Sinners. The *Holy Spirit* of God must be preached on, as the third Person in the Holy Trinity, as the Renewer and Sanctifier of Souls, and as the Comforter and Guide of the Saints. But, alas! Proud Man is grown so much in Love with his own Spirit, and depends so much upon his natural and acquired Abilities, that God's blessed Spirit is woefully neglected, though he is the great Author of the new Birth. The *Decrees* of God, or his *eternal Purpose*, must be opened; though Vessels

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of Wrath fitted to Destruction is an awful Theme, yet Vessels of Mercy, afore prepared unto Glory, is a most sweet Subject: Eternal Election is inexpressibly endearing.

The *Fall of Man* into Sin *in* and by *Adam*, and his *Rise* again unto Holiness and eternal Salvation, *in* and by *Christ*, must be preached on; for if we see not our Sin and Misery by Nature, we shall not cry out for Mercy and Grace; if our *Malady* be not shown us, we shall not seek out for a *Remedy*; if our Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores, be not laid open before us in the Ministry of God's Word, Balm out of *Gilead*, or the precious Blood of *Christ*, will be little set by, little look'd after. If Ministers would not be guilty of the Death of Souls, they must preach that *Original Sin* is the Fountain from whence all actual Transgressions flow.

The *Law* and the *Gospel* must be distinctly handled and opened to the Hearers: The *Law*, as a School-master, to drive us to *Christ*; the *Gospel*, as a Doctrine of Grace, that *freely* offers Christ and eternal Salvation in him to returning Sinners: The *Law* must be preached on as a *Rule of Life*, as what must be obey'd, or we shall be accursed; the *Gospel*, as what holds out to us *Strength and Ability* to obey the *Law*. The great Article, in the Apostle's Commission, was preaching the Gospel, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*, Mark xvi. 15. Why then do Ministers neglect to declare the sweetest, as well as the greatest Part of their Commission? Why is the everlasting *Gospel* of *Christ* hid from Hearers? There is woful preaching where the glad Tidings of the *Gospel* are not preached. No glad Tidings are ever heard where the *Gospel* is not heard: Ministers bring no good News while they bring no *Gospel* News. O that God, in Mercy, would revive *Gospel* Preaching!

Grace

Grace must be preach'd on. How often was this in the Apostle *Paul's* Mouth and Ministry? *Grace in God*, that is, the Love and Favour which is in God, must be held out as the rich Fountain from whence all the Good that God does for us, or works in us, continually flows: All the Blessings we shall receive in Time, or be Partakers of to all Eternity, rise from this everlasting Spring. The *Grace* that is in God is that *Grace* by which we are saved. Imputation of our Sins to Christ; full Satisfaction to the Justice of God for all our Sins by the Death of Christ; the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness unto us; are rich and noble Doctrines, the very Sweet and Marrow of all the *Gospel*; and we shall never have a good World, a believing, obedient World, till these Truths are preach'd up again, with greater Life and Zeal. The *Gift of Grace*, that is, the Grace or Graces which God freely bestows on us in and by *Christ*, must be preach'd on: Faith, Repentance, Love, Hope, Fear, and every other Grace, must be explain'd to us, and urged upon us, that we may live daily in a lively Exercise thereof.

Error and Sin must, in the Ministry of God's Word, be shown to us, in their *black* and *dismal* Colours, that we may flee from them as from Hell it self. Death and Judgment must be often preach'd on; and so must Heaven and Hell, that we may be awaken'd to do all we can, to escape Hell and win Heaven.

But there is one Thing I would speak a little more fully to here: The Times we live in call upon us to know what it is to preach *Christ*, lest some, as they *would really do*, make us believe, that preaching *Christ* is what indeed it is not. Well then, *What is it to preach Christ?* I answer, to preach Christ *directly* and *properly*, is, to preach of his Person, Natures, Qualifications, and Offices. It is to declare *who*
Christ

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Christ or the *Messiah* is ; that he is God-Man in one Person ; the great *Jehovah*, who is absolutely eternal, and infinite in all Perfections, the same God the Father and Spirit is. To preach *Christ* is to tell you, Christians, from God's Word, that your *Christ* and *Saviour* is *your God* ; that he is ever graciously present with you all, at all Times, and in all Places ; that he knows all your Wants and Grievances, and can and will supply and redress them all, all Fulness dwelling in him ; that he is the *Almighty*, and can do what he will for you, and when he will. Opening the unfearchable Riches of *Christ*, is preaching *Christ* ; and so is it, to publish that he is the *only Mediator* between God and Men ; our merciful and faithful High-Priest, that has made Atonement, and full Satisfaction to God for the Sins of Men ; that great Prophet, who only can savingly teach you all Things ; that glorious King, *who* is most ready to pardon, and save returning Sinners, and whose Government is most wise, merciful, and gracious. To preach *Christ*, is to preach *Christ crucified*, *Christ* suffering, bleeding, and dying upon the Cross for Sinners ; as risen again for our Justification, making continual Intercession for us, and as one that is gone to Heaven to prepare blessed Mansions of Glory for all his faithful Followers. This is to preach *Christ* ; and it seems plain to me, that this is the Preaching that is meant by this Phrase, *Preaching Christ*, wherever we meet with it in the Scriptures. So it means, *Acts* v. 42. as is plain from *ver.* 30, 31, and 40. And so it does, *Acts* viii. 5. as is evident from the 32d and 33d Verses of that Chapter. And *Acts* ix. 20. is express to the purpose. 1 *Cor.* i. 23. but we preach *Christ* crucified, certainly belongs to *Christ* himself ; for it was *Christ* himself, in his human Nature, that was crucified, and not his Doctrine : And so does 2 *Cor.* i. 19. for there the Apostle tells us, he preach'd
among

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among them, *the Son of God Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 5. is full to this Sense; the Words are, *But we preach Christ Jesus the Lord:* As if he had said, we preach up *Christ* as the *Messiah*, or the Anointed of the Father, as the *only Saviour* of Sinners, and as he is the *Lord* of all. The Verse foregoing assures us, the Apostle declar'd *Christ* to be the *Image of God*; and in the Verse following he speaks of the Face or *Person* of *Jesus Christ*. So that in the Sense of the Scripture, preaching *Christ* is preaching on the personal and relative Glories of *Christ*. We preach *Christ*, when we declare him to be the Author of the *Law* and *Gospel*, and all our *Graces* and *Obedience*; but when we preach on the *Law*, *Gospel*, *Grace*, or good Works, *abstractedly* considered, and without any *Reference* to *Christ*, we preach not *Christ* at all. O that God would awaken Ministers to preach *Christ*! and teach them how to preach him! O that out of Love to precious Souls, he would please to revive preaching on *Christ*! and powerfully influence the Heads and Hearts of Ministers, that we may not dare to preach our selves, but with utmost Skill, Delight, and Zeal, preach *Christ Jesus the Lord*!

5. Are the Holy Scriptures the Word of God? then read, and bear, and search them daily and diligently, that you may get, and grow in a saving Knowledge of the great Truths delivered in them. Every Thing that is truly delightful and profitable to read, is to be found and read in the *Bible*. Would you read *History*? Well, in the *Bible* there is the most noble and excellent *History*; an admirable Account of Kings, Priests, Prophets, and Apostles: There we have the most wonderful *History* of *King Jesus*; an *History* of such a *King* as the World never heard of before; he was a Child, and he was also the mighty God: He was born in Time, and yet he was infinitely Glorious before all Time; he was a Babe
wrap-

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wrapped up in swadling Clothes, and laid in a Manger, and yet the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him; he was, and is, and ever will be, a King of infinite Perfection; he conquer'd Earth and Hell by dying; his Birth, Life, and Death; his glorious Throne, vast Dominions, holy Laws, and noble Subjects, are all elegantly describ'd in holy Writ. A Multitude of the heavenly Host sung Praise to God at the Birth of King Jesus; and all the World was put into Mourning when he died.

Would you read somewhat about *remarkable Providences*? Then read the *Bible*, for there you will find the most *wonderful* Providences that ever were heard of; there you may read of the Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Speed of a Divine Providence. O what wonderful Power and Goodness appear'd!

* *when the Israelites walked upon dry-land in the midst of the Sea, and the Waters were a Wall unto them on their right Hand, and on their left; and thus the Lord saved Israel: But all the Host of Pharaoh that came into the Sea after them, were overthrow'n, and covered with Waters, so that there remained not so much as one of them!*

† When the Widow of Zarephath and her Son were going to dress and eat their last Morfel and die; just then steps in the *kind Providence* of the Lord, and gives a new Spring to her just empty Barrel; and the Barrel of Meal wasted not, neither did the Cruse of Oil fail, until the Day the Lord sent Rain upon the Earth. The *Quickness*, as well as the Wisdom, and Mercy of Providence, was very evident in *Mordecai's Case*: *Zeresh*, *Haman's* Wife, did so bestir her self in her wicked Design, as if she would have been too quick for Divine Providence it self: Says she, || *Let a Gallows be made of fifty Cubits high, and to Morrow speak thou*

* Exod. xiv. 28, 29, 30.

|| Esther, Chapters v. and vi.

† 1 Kings xvii. 12, 14.

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unto the King, that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; to Morrow, said she; ay, but for all her haste, she was too late; for *that Night* the good Providence of the Lord would not suffer King *Ahasuerus* to sleep, but put it into his Heart to have somewhat of the Book of Records of the *Chronicles* read unto him; and so order'd, that the very Page and Lines were read, wherein it was found written, that *Mordecai* had told of *Bigthana* and *Tereſh*, two of the King's *Ghamberlains*, the Keepers of the Door, who sought to lay Hands on the King *Ahasuerus*; and hereupon was *Mordecai* honour'd and dignify'd, and *Haman*, for his wicked Design against *Mordecai* and the *Jews*, was hanged on the same Gallows he had prepared for *Mordecai*.

Do you like to read *News*? Well, then read the *Bible*, for there is the *best News* that ever was heard: *News* that *Jesus Christ* came into the World to save the worst, the *chiefest* of Sinners; that *he gave his Life a Ransom* for; or *in the stead of many*. O! what a sweet Piece of *News* is that, *That Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. That *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19. O! what excellent *News*, that *Christ*, the Captain of our Salvation, has conquer'd all his and our Enemies; and is enter'd into Heaven it self, and now appears there *in the Presence of God for us*; where he manages our Cause with the greatest Success, and whence he distributes Gifts unto the *Rebellious* also. Be perswaded then, all of you, to read the Holy Scriptures with a good Understanding, and agreeable Affections; read the precious Promises of the Lord with great Joy; his Threatnings with great Fear; and his Precepts with a pure Heart. O! what an heinous Sin and Shame, that the good Word of God is read no more in our Families and

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Closets! How should that Master give a good Account of himself and Family, that will not daily read God's Word, the Rule of Life, unto it?

And as the Holy Scriptures must be read, because they are God's Word, so for *that very Reason* they must be *heard* also. I beseech you hear the Word of God, for they who *hear and keep it are blessed*, Luke xi. 28. Constantly attend on the Ministry of God's Word. O! what an abominable Sin and Shame to sit loitering at home, or be drinking in the Ale-house, when the *Word of God* is preach'd on, and the Mysteries of the *Gospel of Christ* unfolded! For shame, hasten to hear the Ministry of the *Gospel* every *Lord's Day*, and on every other Opportunity. And be sure you take special Heed *what you hear*, Mark iv. 24. *Beware, lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy, and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ.* Willingly hear and receive whatever is helpful to root, and build you up in *Christ*, and *establish you in the Faith*. But hear no more there, where *Christ*, the Son of God, is made another God than God the Father is. Quit that Company, that Minister, that Congregation, whoever they are, that deny the Son and the Spirit to be the same God that the Father is. You will find, and it may be, when it is too late, what a dangerous Thing it is to encourage an *Arian* in any Measure. Take heed also *how* you hear the Word of God, *Luke viii. 18.* Hear out of a good Conscience, and upon a due and diligent Preparation; hear with great Attention and Intention of Mind and Heart; and in Faith, Love, and godly Fear; hear upon a firm Resolution, that through Grace you will profit by hearing, and do according to what you hear, that is agreeable to the revealed Will of God. Search the Scriptures daily, that you may know whether what you hear be agreeable to them. The Bible only

It is your *Standard* in all Matters of Faith and Practice. Most carefully then search for the right *Sense* and *Meaning* of what you read in the Scriptures; for it is the *Sense* of the Scripture that is the Scripture; not the Words, but the right *Sense* of them, that is the Mind of the Holy Ghost in the Divine Revelation; and only that *Sense* which the Spirit of God speaking in the Scripture *intends*, is the right *Sense* of the Scripture. But, perhaps, you will say, *What must we do to find out the true and right Sense of the Scripture?* I answer, you must *pray* importunately to the Lord, that he would open your Understanding, that you may understand the Scriptures; you must diligently *compare* one Scripture with another; heedfully mind the *Scope* and *Connection* of the Place; and especially, *do* the Will of God, and then shall you know whether the Doctrine be of God, *John* vii. 17. Will you further enquire, and say, *How may we know that we understand the Scriptures right?* that we take in the *true Sense* and *Meaning* of them? I answer, then we understand the Scriptures in a right *Sense*, when the Understanding we have of them is *the Fruit* of serious, importunate, believing Prayer; when it is not the result of Fancy or Wit, but of a *sound Mind*, and ingenuous *surrendring* of our selves to the *Word* for its *Meaning*. Then we understand the Scriptures aright, when the Understanding we have of them *warms* our Hearts with *pure Love* to God, and fills us with Reverence, and godly Fear of him; when it lets us see *King Jesus* in all his Beauty, fixes our Dependence alone on him for eternal Salvation, and makes us sincere, willing, zealous, and constant in our Obedience to him. O! that the Spirit of God himself would lead us into *his Sense* of the Holy Scriptures, and give us a saving Knowledge of them! O! that we may not rest in a bare *formal* Knowledge of God's Word, such as the Unregenerate only have! But may, through

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Mercy, be well furnished with that *special*, spiritual, practical Knowledge of the Scripture, which will evidence it self by good Works, and is the Knowledge of an holy, believing Soul !

6. Are the Scriptures the very Word of God? then *they worship God the best who keep closest to the Holy Scriptures in their worshipping of him.* The Scriptures are our standing Rule in this Case, beyond whose Bound we must not go, nor come short of it. If God has not commanded it, nor has it come into his Mind, we are not to meddle with it, in any part of his Worship. Therefore let us labour to do all that God has commanded us to do in his Worship, and nothing more or less. *Christ is a perfect Lawgiver ; he has left nothing short, nothing for Man to add to his holy Law.* We certainly worship God in vain, while we teach *for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, Matth. xv. 9. The Object, the Matter, and Manner, of all acceptable Divine Worship, is plainly revealed to us in God's Word ; and thence only we must receive them.

As to the *Object of Divine Worship*, he is the One only living and true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit : To these three Persons in the one Godhead, all religious Worship is to be given ; this Worship is absolutely appropriated to God, as is evident from his Word. The Lord (*Jehovah*) the God of Israel, hath expressly commanded and said, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*, Exod. xx. 3. And again God says, Chap. xxxiv. 14. *Thou shalt worship no other God ; for the Lord, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* Nay, if there should arise among us a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and give us a Sign or Wonder, and the Sign or Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto us, saying, *Let us go after other Gods (which you have not known) and let us serve them ; we must not hearken unto the Words of that Prophet, or that Dreamer of Dreams : — But we must obey the Voice of the Lord our God, and serve*

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*serve him, and cleave unto him.—If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thy own Soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other Gods,—Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine Eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him, &c. Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9. Jesus Christ says, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Matth. iv. 10. These Texts, with many others that might be mentioned, undeniably prove, that the One true God only is to be worshipped; and, therefore seeing that religious Worship is given in the Holy Scripture, both by *Precept* and *Example*, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, it necessarily follows, that these two Divine Persons, together with the Father, are the One true God; so that, when we worship the One true God, we worship the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and when we worship any one of these three Divine Persons, we worship the most High God. And as the Object of all religious Worship is One, the One true God only, so the *Worship it self* is, and must be of one Kind only, and can no more admit of Inferiority or Subordination, than God himself can. Certainly it is most absurd, as well as wicked, to give *inferior* or *subordinate* Worship to the most High God; and yet we must worship him only; therefore there neither is, nor can be any such a Thing as *inferior* religious Worship. That Distinction, of Supreme and Subordinate Worship, is a wicked Whim, and directly contradictory to all those Texts that tell us, we must worship God only. The *Socinians* and *Arians* are so pinched with this Argument, that God only must be worshipped, that when they have made *Christ* a mere Creature, and yet worship him, one of them falls on to repeal the very first Command; *Thou shalt have no other**

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other Gods before me. * He acknowledges boldly their idolatrous and impious Practice; *We do grant then,* says he, *that we worship one besides the Supreme God.* Now to make way for this their abominable Practice, he says, *and if it be included in the first Command, that we should have no other Object of Worship* (than the Supreme God) *we say, that Command is so far repeal'd.* What will such daring Men stick at? If they repeal the *very first* Command of God; a Command which is the *Foundation* of all the rest, and is it self grounded on the *infinite Perfections* of God; what will they not repeal? The Lord give us Grace to abhor such Practices, and to receive the first Command, as a Command of eternal Obligation!

The *Matter* of Divine Worship, or Parts of it, must be only what God has required, lest he come and say, to our Confusion, *Who required these Things at your Hands?*

The *Manner* of Divine Worship is also plainly told us in the Scripture: Neither can we think that any part of our Worship will be acceptable to God, unless it be agreeable to his revealed Will. We must worship God *in Spirit and in Truth; with a true Heart, and with the whole Heart; in Faith, and with Reverence, and godly Fear.* We must serve God with all possible Care and Heed; O! that is an awful Text, *Cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully, or negligently,* Jer. xlviii. 10. We must pray as the Scripture directs, *in the Name of Christ, by the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, in Faith, and fervently, for Things agreeable to the Will of God.* We must hear *attentively, and in Faith,* else we cannot profit. Ministers must *preach* according to Scripture Rules; they must *preach the Word,* and speak the Things which become *sound Doctrine, plainly, and with Autho-*

* Appeal to a Turk or an Indian, pag. 124, 125.

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riety. We must *sing with Understanding*, and with *Melody* in our Hearts to the *Lord*; and that we may do so, we have need to sing the *Lord's* own Songs, Songs or Psalms of his own inditing; undoubtedly these are fittest to be sung, and most refreshing and chearing to the *Lord's* People. How dare we do any more in *Baptism* than *baptize*, or *wash*, the Party *in*, or *into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*? For this is the whole of *Baptism*, as instituted by *Christ*. We must eat and drink at the *Lord's Table*, in remembrance of him, in the lively Exercise of every Grace, and in a Posture most agreeable to the Nature of a Feast.

And that you may have just and due Thoughts of these holy Ordinances, think *becomingly* of *Christ*; for such as your Thoughts of *Christ* are, such will your Thoughts of his Institutions be. If you think and believe that *Christ* is but a mere Creature, and not the most High God, then you must think and believe that his Ordinances of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, are but the Ordinances of a Creature. And, what a mean and wicked Thought would that be? A Thought that would plunge you into *vile Idolatry* every Time you approach'd the *Lord's Table*, and worshipp'd *Christ* there. And is it not hence that some reckon the Sacraments mere Ceremonies? They first make *Christ* a Creature, and then they set his Ordinances at *nought*: They can observe them, or not observe them, just as the Custom of the Country where they live, is. But what, do the Commands of *Christ* stand or fall according to the Custom of Nations? Surely not; for if they did, *Nations*, and not *Christ*, the *King* of Nations, would be our *Law-givers*. Chuse what others do then, let us observe the holy Ordinances of *Christ*, *purely* because *he* commands us; let not the Custom of Nations, or the Will of Men, but the *sovereign Will and Authority* of *Christ*,

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Christ, the King of the Church, influence and overrule us in this Matter: And whenever we go to the *Lord's Table*, let us not dare to go out of mere Ceremony, but to worship *Christ* indeed, in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*, as he is *the most high God*; to give up our selves again to him to be his for ever, and to feed upon his Body and Blood, which are Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, and afford the most substantial spiritual Nourishment for the Life of precious Souls.

7. Are the Scriptures the Word of God? then it must needs be *a most heinous and dreadful Sin, and Wickedness to deny them to be so; or to despise and abuse them.* A denial of the Holy Scriptures to be God's Word, manifestly carries in it an Endeavour to thrust God, and all true Godliness, out of the World; it is to do what they can to make God a Liar, to make void the Ordinances of *Christ*, and the Ministry of the *Gospel*, and put an End to all Religion at once: Such Persons can neither know God nor themselves, nor would they know either. Such as will not believe that the Holy Scriptures are God's Word, plainly declare thereby, that they will have nothing to do with God; that, chuse what Discoveries God makes of himself, or whatever he says of himself, they will never regard him; for how can we have clearer Discoveries of God, or more express Commands from him, than we have in the Holy Scriptures? Denying the Scripture to be the Word of God, cuts off all Faith and Obedience to God at one Blow; for what is divine Faith, but a *sincere Assent* to what God saith? But if you reject what God hath spoken in the Holy Scriptures, where is your Faith? And what is Obedience, but to *do* what God has commanded? But if you reject his revealed Will, where is your Obedience? On what is it grounded? Or how does it become acceptable? Had Men any Fear of God before their Eyes, any Thought of obey-
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ing him, according to his Will, they would never turn their Backs upon the *Holy Bible*, wherein only the Will of God is revealed. What intolerable Impudence and Madness is it, to deny that Word to be God's Word, which God himself, his *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, many a time call so!

Will the stupid *Deists* of this Age awake, and consider what fearful Things are hanging over their Heads? Will they consider *whose* Word it is they reject? That it is his Word, in whom they live and move, and have their Being? His Word, who is able to destroy Soul and Body in Hell, and will everlastingly punish all those that finally reject and disobey it! Will they consider that *such* a Word it is they do refuse? That it is the everlasting *Gospel* of *Christ*, the good Word of God, that brings us the best News that ever we could desire, to wit, News of eternal Salvation, by One able and willing to save. The *Deists* reject the best Word that ever was spoken, or ever heard of: Certainly this Rejection must be upon the utmost Peril; for it is Rebellion against the Word and Command of the great King of Heaven and Earth: It is refusing the clearest Light; and hence those that refuse it, are called * Rebels of Light, or Light's Rebels. O that such would remember what *Christ* says! *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words, bath One that judgeth him; the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last Day, John xii. 48.* And how should that Word judge him who denies it, but unto eternal Condemnation? *He that believeth not shall be damned. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our*

* Job xxiv. 13.

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Lord Jesus Christ, 2 *Theff.* i. 7, 8. They who fight against the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of the Lord, must certainly fall and die; it will be sheathed in their Bowels to their everlasting Wo: There is, there can be, no standing against this Weapon when it is drawn, and cuts by God's almighty Arm. Alas, what Horror and Despair will shortly rend asunder the very Hearts of those who have no Hope in God's Word! What fearful War and Confusion will rage in their Breasts, who dare reject the *Gospel of Peace*! For this is to proclaim open War against God himself, their Maker. O what an Hell, what a Damnation, Punishment, and Pain, is prepared for those who believe not God's Word! It will be more tolerable for those abominable Wretches that were in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, in the Day of Judgment, than for those who will not hear the Words of the *Apostles*, *Matt.* x. 14, 15.

And as it is a most woful Thing to deny the Holy Scriptures to be God's Word, so it is a dreadful Thing indeed, to *burlesque* or *droll* upon them; for that is to droll upon the infinite Wisdom of God displayed in them. Jestings upon, or with, any Thing in the *Bible*, is making Sport with his Word, who will shortly call us to Account for every *idle Word* we speak, and judge us for every Thing done in the Body. What greater Sign can there be of a profane wicked Spirit, than to *banter* God in his Word? Whence comes Shame, Dismayedness, and Folly upon wise Men? But even from hence, that they reject the Word of the Lord, *Jer.* viii. 9. *The wise Men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what Wisdom is in them?* The Rejecters of God's Word are the greatest Fools upon Earth; there is no Wisdom

dom at all in them. O what fearful Judgments they are exposed to who despise the Word of the Lord! *Therefore as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame consumeth the Chaff, so their Root shall be Rottenness, and their Blossom shall go up as Dust; because they have cast away the Law of the Lord of Hosts, and have despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel, Isai. v. 24.* The unlearned and unstable, who *wrest* the Holy Scriptures, do thereby hasten on their own Destruction, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. O how should Ministers watch and pray, that they may open God's Word according to God's Mind! A false Interpretation of Texts of Scripture is a false Interpretation of the *Will* of God. To pervert the Sense of Scripture-Truth, is to pervert the *Mind* of God himself; and what a sad Thing must it needs be, when, instead of what God means in and by his Word, we give our vain, erroneous, and sinful Glosses upon it! To feed precious Souls with Poison, instead of the wholesome Food of God's Word, is such an heinous Crime, such an horrid Sin, as will sink Men into the nethermost Hell. Despisers and Rejecters of God's Word, I look upon as the basest, and most wicked Part of Mankind: They appear, to me, to be the greatest Dishonour to God, the greatest Shame to themselves, the most dangerous Creatures to all about them, of any Men in all the World: They are the greatest Plague to any Nation that ever can come to it; they are altogether unfit for human Society; for, as far as their Influence goes, they bring eternal Ruin upon Souls. Fly a *Deist*, I mean one that *obstinately* rejects revealed Religion, as you would fly the Plague; the Plague can but kill the Body, but a *Deist*, if you hearken to him, will kill Soul and Body both for ever. That's an awful Passage of a judicious Author;

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thor * ; says he, *Every one who has enjoy'd this divine Revelation (a Blessing so delightful in it self, and so infinitely superior to all the lower Comforts, the empty, transient, and deceitful Gratifications of this Life) and yet, through an unaccountable Obstinacy, and Perverseness of Mind, can be so deeply infatuated, as to condemn, disparage, and wilfully reject it, is, of all reasonable Beings, the most entirely miserable, and even the most abject and forlorn Part of the whole Creation: And whilst he is all this, and whatsoever else can come within the Notion of Misery to himself; he is farther the most ungenerous, inhuman, unsociable, and barbarous, beyond Expression, to his Fellow-Creatures; so far as he endeavours, by sly and artful Insinuations, to draw them into the same deplorable way of thinking, and consequently to rob them of the only solid Comfort, Serenity, and Satisfaction, which can either make a prosperous State happy, or be a sufficient Balance to the numberless Crosses, Troubles, and Afflictions, in this World.*

8. Are the Scriptures the Word of God? then labour to know, believe in, most dearly love, and constantly obey the Lord Jesus Christ, the great and noble Subject treated of in them. Assure your selves, if you live and die ignorant of Christ, you are lost and undone for ever: They who are without Christ, have no Hope, and are without God in the World. Now, that you may have a distinct Knowledge of Christ, and see sufficient Ground to believe in him, love him with all your Hearts, and obey him all your Days. I shall answer this very weighty Question, *Who is Christ?* And I shall shew you this, both negatively and positively.

* The Reverend Mr. Curteis's Dissertation on the extreme Folly and Danger of Infidelity, Pag. 181, 182.

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1. Negatively ; and, 1. *Christ* is not a subordinate God ; not a God of a different, inferior Nature, to that of God the Father. (1.) Because if *Christ* be a subordinate God, then there are two Gods : But this is contrary to Reason, and the whole Tenor of divine Revelation. The Holy Scriptures tell us, over and over again, that there is but *one God*. Hear, O Israel, *the Lord our God is one Lord* (Jehovah) Deut. vi. 4. God himself expressly says, *Besides me there is no God : Is there a God besides me ? yea, there is no God ; I know not any*, Isai. xlv. 6, 8. *We know that an Idol is nothing in the World, and that there is no other God but one*, 1 Cor. viii. 4. Never hearken then to the *Arian* Crew, who would have you to believe, in direct Contradiction to what God says, that there are *two* Gods. Affirming that there are more Gods than one, is a Denial of the one only true God ; it robs him of his first glorious and distinguishing Perfection, *One* ; for it is a plain Contradiction to say there is *one God only*, and yet assert a supreme and subordinate God ; and it is as contradictory, that he who believes in *more* Gods than one, should believe in *one* only ; and he who does not believe in the one only true God, is an *Atheist*. The Meaning of this Proposition, that there is a supreme and subordinate God, appears to me to be this ; that there is no one only true God at all. Farther, 'tis evident, that all those who believe that there is one only living and true God, cannot make *Christ* a subordinate God, but they must of Necessity believe him to be a false and a dead God. (2.) Affirming *Christ* to be a subordinate God, is directly contrary to the Word of God ; for there he is declared to be the *great*, the *true*, the *living* God ; *Jehovah*, *Lord of Hosts*, the *mighty* God, *God blessed for ever* ; all which are proper Titles of the most high God. (3.) If *Christ* be a subordinate God, then he is
but

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but a *Creature*, a mere *Creature*, and no more. A subordinate God is *really* and *essentially* distinct from the most high God; and every Being essentially distinct from the most high God is a *Creature*, or what was made by God. (4.) A subordinate God we must not *know*; we must have nothing to do with him; for God has forbid us to know any other God but himself: His Words are these; *And thou shalt know no God but me*, Hof. xiii. 4. (5.) A subordinate God is Nonsense; it plainly imports a subordinate most High, a subordinate *Jehovah*, a subordinate Infinity, Almightyness, and Omniscieny; it imports, that he who is *without* Beginning, and absolutely eternal, as God is, yet *had* a Beginning, as every subordinate Being has; so that a subordinate God is made up of palpable Contradictions; every Person then of consistent Thought must needs say, *This is none of our Christ*. Nor, 2. Is *Christ* a Medium betwixt a Being self-existent, or the most high God, and a *Creature*; for, if he be such a Medium, then, (1.) He is not the most high God. Nor, (2.) Is he God's own proper Son, as the Scripture says he is. Nor, (3.) Is he to be worshipped with any religious Worship at all; for the most high God *only* is thus to be worshipped, *Matt. iv. 10*. Nor, (4.) Is he our Saviour; for *Jehovah*, the *Lord God of Israel only*, is our Saviour, *Isai. xliii. 11*. Hof. xiii. 4. (5.) Christ is not such a Medium, because there is not such a Medium spoken of in all the Holy Scriptures. No Man whatever can shew one *Text*, in all the *Bible*, where any *Thing*, or *Being*, is spoken of, but *that Thing*, or *Being*, is either God, or a *Creature*, or both; either a self-existent Being, or what derives its Being from him who is so. It is certain, that *that Christ*, who is a subordinate God, or a Medium betwixt God and a *Creature*, is never mentioned in all God's Word:
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He was never prophesied of in the Old Testament ; nor is there one Word said of him in the New. O that Men would, at length, be ashamed of such absurd Fooleries, and wicked Inventions ! The *Arian Christ* is no *Christ* of God's sending into the World ; no *Christ* of the Scripture's describing, no *Christ* that can be of any Advantage to Sinner or Saint.

But, 2. and Positively, *Who Christ is* : And he is *God-man, in one Person* ; or, he is the Son of God, who did assume human Nature unto, and has it subsisting in personal Union with himself ; or he is the second Person in the sacred Trinity, who has human Nature united to the divine Nature in one divine Person ; so that both his Natures have but one personal Subsistence, and are together but one Person. *Christ* is the *great God*, who was manifest in the *Flesh* : He is that wonderful Person, who, as concerning the *Flesh*, or his human Nature, came of the *Fathers*, but, as to his *divine Nature*, is over all, *God blessed for ever* ; so that *Christ Jesus*, our *Lord*, is truly and essentially *God*, the same one only living and true *God* that the *Father* and *Spirit* are : He also is truly *Man*, having a true human *Body*, and reasonable *Soul* ; there is nothing that does supply the Place of a reasonable *Soul* in *Christ* ; not his *Deity*, not a superangelick Nature, not any Thing else at all ; to assert that there is, is to deny the Humanity of *Christ*.

Now this is the *Christ* who is spoken of all over the Holy Scriptures, even from one End of them to the other. This is the *Christ* prophesied of in the Old Testament, and held out to us, as the only Saviour of Sinners, in the New : This is the *Christ* that Saints rejoice and glory in, and will live and die by. Come then, Beloved, I beseech you, let this *Christ* be your *Christ*, let this *Christ* be your *Lord God* and *Saviour*. This is that dear *Christ Jesus*, who hath made *Peace*,
through

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through the Blood of his Cross: And what, will you refuse and reject this blessed Saviour? God forbid you should. Consider, Sinners, it is *absolutely necessary* that you have a Saviour, else you must perish for ever; and it is *as necessary* that you have this *Christ* for your Saviour, for there neither is nor can be any other. And, for your Comfort, hear how affectionately he calls on you, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 28. *If any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*, John vii. 37. Come then, Sinners; come away to *Christ* at his Call: Say not, if we come he will cast us off, for verily he will not; these are his own Words, *And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37. But will you say, Alas for us! we are great Sinners! Heinous Offenders! What shall we do? I answer, what should you do, but come to *Christ*? For *he is able to save to the uttermost*. Consider, Sinners, the *Christ* I now offer to you is *the mighty God*; and was he not so, I would never propose him to you as a Saviour: But, seeing that he is the great God, what is it he cannot do for you? He can do every Thing for you *necessary* to Salvation; he can pardon all your Sins, chuse how many or how great soever they have been; he can thoroughly sanctify you, fit you for, and bring you safe to Glory. Resolve then, Sinners, in his Strength, that this *Christ* shall be yours; that you will accept of him for your Saviour, without any Delay.

This is the *Christ*, Saints, who has done and suffer'd wonderful Things for you, and wrought admirable Things in you. *Christ*, as your *Mediator*, has made up all Breaches betwixt God and you, and brought you into special Friendship and Favour with him. *Christ*, as your *Surety*, has paid off all
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your Debts, and fully answered all the Demands of infinite Justice on your Behalf. *Christ*, as a merciful and faithful *High Priest*, not only died for you, but is making continual Intercession for you, that you may get safe to Glory. As a *Prophet*, he has savingly instructed you in the Mysteries of the Gospel; and, as *King*, he has conquer'd you for himself, and made you a willing and holy People: He has dress'd and adorn'd your Hearts with his own blessed Image, set up his gracious Kingdom and Government there, and will bring you safe to Heaven. Ever rejoice in this, Believers, that your Saviour is your God; and let this drive away all enbondaging Doubts and Fears from you. Let us all trust in *Christ Jesus* for eternal Salvation; love him with all our Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength, and obey him with the greatest Delight and Pleasure all the Days of our appointed Time: Let us mourn and weep bitterly for all our Sins against him, and long to be with him in Glory, where Sin will cease to act, and cease to be, and where we shall be perfectly holy, and happy to all Eternity.

9. Are the Holy Scriptures the Word of God? then see that you *make use of them in every Relation and Condition of Life, all your Life over*; and *ever live according to them*. You must live by this Rule, if you would live well; therefore know and observe this Rule every one of you: High and Low, Rich and Poor, Young and Old, must search into the Scriptures for Direction in their Duty to God and Man. Kings and Subjects, Ministers and People, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, must all know and believe the Scriptures, that they may be dutiful to God, and behave well towards one another. *Kings* will not, they cannot, reign and rule in Faith and godly Fear, or for the

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Honour of *Christ*, and the *Holy Spirit* of God, or to the Comfort of God's peculiar People, if they be utter Strangers to a divine Revelation. *Subjects*, who have no Knowledge of God's revealed Will, will neither fear God, nor honour the *King* as they ought; they who know not, or will not have *King Jesus* to reign over them, are in the greatest Readiness to rebel against any earthly *King*, chuse how good he be. 'Tis evident, he cannot be a good *Minister* of *Christ*, who is ignorant of the *Gospel* of *Christ*; he only can faithfully speak God's Word, who *has* it; and he who has it not, will *tell* Dreams: And that People, who know not the Holy Scriptures, may as soon hear a *Popish* Priest, as a Protestant Minister, and are as ready to receive the greatest Errors, as the greatest Truths: Preach who will, and what they will, whether *Christ* be honoured or blasphemed, is all one with those who are ignorant of God's Word. And truly they can be but bad Husbands and Wives, bad Parents and Children, bad Masters and Servants, who search not the Word of God for Direction in those their Relations. What is an Husband or Wife, a Master or Servant good for, that cannot pray? And how should they pray, who seldom, or never, look into God's Word, the *only* Rule to direct us how to pray? Children and Servants, who neglect the *Bible*, are never like to be a Comfort to their Parents and Masters; they who mind not what God says in his Word, we cannot expect they should value what Men say: Therefore Parents and Masters, as ever you desire to have knowing, holy, obedient, and faithful Children and Servants, give them Time, and put them on, to pray, and read God's Word, and hear the Ministry thereof.

Let us all, with the greatest Concern, and Care, and Diligence, improve the Scriptures to our present
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and future Advantage : They were given us for this End ; *For whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that we, through Patience, and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope,* Rom. xv. 4. The Scriptures shew us the Author, Nature, End, and most powerful Motives to Patience, Comfort, Hope, and every other Grace. Let us all search the Scriptures, that, through the Blessing of the Lord, we may get and grow in Grace. God works *in and by* his Word. Sinners, labour to improve the Scriptures to your Conversion and Regeneration ; for God, *of his own Will, begets us again with the Word of Truth,* James i. 18. Saints, improve the Scriptures to your more abundant Sanctification, Peace, and Comfort ; you are *sanctified by the Word of Truth,* John xvii. 17. and at this Word you may rejoice, as those who find great Spoil, *Psal. cxix. 162.* O let us, with all Speed, every Way, and unto every good End, improve the good Word of God, lest he take it from us. What, is there no Fear of this, in this Day of Back-sliding and Apostasy ? Look well about you : What, can you see no Signs of a *departing* Gospel ? No sad Tokens that God is forsaking us ? That *Christ* and his *Spirit* are *leaving* us ? For *Christ's* sake, seriously consider,

1. When Persons are *weary* of the Sabbath-day, deal *unjustly*, and make *Merchandize* of the Poor and Needy, then God threatens a *Famine* of hearing his Word, *Amos viii.* Alas ! what Injustice, Unmercifulness, and Profanation of the Lord's-Day is amongst us !
2. When Men suffer Error to abound, we may fear Truth is leaving us ; for the Apostle *Paul* would not give Place by Subjection, no not *for an Hour*, that the Truth of the Gospel might *continue* with them, *Gal. ii. 5.* plainly importing, that if he had yielded, he had endangered the Continuance of

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the Gospel amongst them: But, alas! what yielding to, yea, embracing of, those deadly Errors of *Arminianism*, *Arianism*, and *Deism*, is amongst us! For the Idolatry of the *Jews*, the Glory of the God of *Israel* went up from the Cherub to the Threshold of the House, and a fearful Destruction came upon them, *Ezek. viii. ix. Chapters.* We have the *Arian* Idolatry raging amongst us, and more; but we may assure our selves, if we have Agreement or Communion with *Papists* and *Arian* Idolaters, God will have no Communion with us; for *what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* 2 Cor. vi. 16. 3. When the Lord cuts asunder his Staves of Beauty and Bands, then he will leave and scatter that People, *Zech. xi.* Well, where is our Church Order, Discipline, Government, and our Unity? 4. When Men receive not *the Love of the Truth*, or the Truth in Love, God sends them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lye, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. And was there ever a stronger Delusion amongst the Professors of Religion, in any Part of the World, than that Men should make a Saviour of that which is neither God nor a Creature? And are not Men now more easy to be deluded, and more ready to believe Lyes against the Truth, than ever? 5. When Men are fallen into Sin and Error, and will not repent and do their first Works, God has threatned that he will come quickly and remove their Candlestick out of his Place, Rev. ii. 5. O then, what will our Impenitency bring upon us! What can prevent our Ruin? Nothing, surely nothing, but infinite Mercy, importunate Prayers, and bitter Humiliation. O pray and weep, and weep and pray, that God would, for Christ's sake, have Mercy on us, and continue his Gospel unto us and ours! And, as ever you desire that the Word of Christ should dwell amongst you, be sure that

that it dwell in you richly in all Wisdom, and ever live, think, speak, and act, as it directs.

10. and *Lastly*, Are the Scriptures the Word of God? then let us appeal to them, or to God speaking in them, to evidence to us, and settle us in, all Scripture-Truths, and decide all Controversies in Divinity. To what can you appeal, with greater Assurance and Safety, than to the Word of God? Whenever any Controversy arises in Matters of Faith, then to the Law, and to the Testimony; then search the Scriptures; there you have the *highest* and *last* Resort: The Scripture, or God speaking in the Scripture, is the *supreme* and *infallible* Judge of all Controversies: *Christ* himself appealed to the Holy Scriptures, and so did the *Apostles*, and so let us do. Though there is a private Judgment, which every Believer has, and a publick Judgment amongst Ministers; yet the Holy Scriptures are the *Lydius Lapis*, or *Touch-stone* of all Trials; all final Determinations must be made by them. Suppose a Thousand of the most learned Men in all *Great Britain*, and such as pretend to the greatest Godliness, should tell you, that *Christ* is not the most High God; that he is not unoriginated, nor independent, but a derived, dependent Being: Suppose they should tell you, that the Miracles of *Christ*, as recorded by the *Evangelists*, and literally understood, are the *lying* Wonders of *Antichrist*; and, that there is neither Heaven nor Hell; you are not to believe *one* Word of all that, which they say; because God in his Word has expressly told you the contrary. It is not what *Men* say, but what *God* says, that you are to believe. And to put you in mind again of the good old Doctrine delivered in God's Word, I shall conclude with a plain Scripture Answer to some Questions.

QUEST.

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QUEST. 1. *Has God chosen, or elected, some certain Persons to Holiness and eternal Life and Happiness before the World began? Yes, he has. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love, Eph. i. 4. As many as were ordained to eternal Life believed, Acts xiii. 48. For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the Purpose of God, according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth, Rom. ix. 11.*

QUEST. 2. *Did Christ die for all, and every individual Person, that has been, is, or ever shall be in the World? He did not. The Scripture never goes farther than this, that Christ died for all, and gave himself a Ransom for all; it never says for all Men, or for every Man; that I remember; and therefore, why should we dare to say so? That Text, Heb. ii. 9. though it be translated for every Man, yet the Original hath not Man in it; this only is Scripture there, that he (Christ) should taste Death for all, or for every, that is, for all the Sons of God; or for all those he was not ashamed to call Brethren; or, for every one of those he was to bring to Salvation: This is plain from the whole Context. And though it is said, that Christ Jesus gave himself a Ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. yet it is not said for all Men, but only for all; that is, some of all Sorts, Ranks and Conditions; for some out of every Kindred, Tongue, People, and Nation, as it is expressed, Rev. v. 9. Christ is said to die, to give his Life for, and purchase, the Elect, his Sheep, his Church, Rom. viii. 33, 34. John x. 11, 12. Acts xx. 28. But he is never said to die for the Non-elect, for the Goats, or for Infidels, who shall live and die Enemies to him. And tho' Christ died only for some, yet these some are Thousands upon Thousands, and ten Thousand thousand thousand Times ten Thousand. And let us greatly rejoice in this,*
that

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that we have the Revelation, and Offer of a crucified Christ; for I am fully perswaded, that where the Bible is, there are the Redeemed of the Lord, and there shall be the Churches of Christ. Who can think, that Christ died for those that never hear one Word of him, or his Death, all their Lives over, from Generation to Generation? But well may we conclude, that there are the Redeemed of the Lord, where the Holy Scriptures, that bring the glad Tidings of Salvation by Christ, are.

QUEST. 3. Does God give Grace sufficient to Salvation to all; and every individual Person in the whole World? Or, is saving Grace universal? No, it is not. There is no such Thing as universal saving Grace in the Holy Scriptures, neither in Sense nor in Words; but the contrary. Yet the Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto this Day, Deut. xxix. 4. At that Time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to Babes, Matth. xi. 25. He (Christ) answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you, to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given, Matth. xiii. 11. What should this universal saving Grace be? Is it pardoning and justifying Grace and Mercy? No, that it cannot be, for all Men are not pardoned and justified, because they who are justified by the Blood of Christ shall be saved from Wrath through him, Rom. v. 9. But all Men are not saved. Is it the Grace of effectual Vocation? No, because whom God calls he also justifies, and whom he justifies, he also glorifies, Rom. viii. 30. But all Men shall not be glorified. Is it the Grace of Faith? No, not that neither, for all Men have not Faith, 2 Thess. iii. 2. Is it the Grace of Sanctification? No, that it cannot be, because

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cause he who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren, Heb. ii. 11. And every Man is not a sanctified Brother of Christ.

QUEST. 4. *But has not a natural Man, that is, a Man without Christ, and his renewing Grace, Free-will to what is spiritually good? Or, have not unconverted Men a Power or Ability of Will to convert themselves truly unto God; or, to repent and believe unto Salvation? No, they have not. Every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. Neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit, Matth. vii. 18. No Man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, John vi. 44. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good Pleasure, Phil. ii. 13.*

QUEST. 5. *Are we justified in the sight of God by good Works, or by Faith in Christ? Not by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, Gal. ii. 16. But that no Man is justified by the Law in the Sight of God, is evident; for the Just shall live by Faith, Gal. iii. 11. Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law, Rom. iii. 28.*

QUEST. 6. *But is not Holiness necessary to Salvation? Yes, it is absolutely necessary to Salvation. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. or have a beatifick Vision of him in Glory. Holiness is necessary, as it is the Light and Life of the Soul; the Soul is a dark, dead, miserable Being, without it. Holiness is necessary, for without it, God neither will nor can take any Pleasure in us, nor we any Delight in him, or in his Service. Holiness is necessary to fit us for Fellowship and Communion with God*
here;

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here, and for the full Enjoyment of him hereafter. Our Right to Heaven is in and by Christ and his Righteousness, but our internal Meetness and Fitness for Heaven is our Holiness.

QUEST. 7. Shall all those who are sincere Saints, or true Believers in Christ, certainly persevere in Grace unto the end, and be saved? Yes, they shall. Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 6. For I am perswaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 40.

These are some of those great Truths, which appear to me to be plainly delivered in God's Word: And from God's Word I would have you to receive them; not from me, but from God speaking to you in the Holy Scriptures; and therefore I most earnestly beseech you, Search the Scriptures daily, whether these Things are so. You never saw the Day when you had greater need to keep close to the Scripture of Truth, than now; now, when *Atheism*, *Deism*, and *Arianism* are abounding, and all manner of Wickedness overflowing the Nation, as if the Depths of Hell were open'd.

I pitch'd on the Words of my Text on purpose to quicken and stir you up to search and study the Oracles of God, to confirm you in that necessary Belief, that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and so to endear them to you, that you may resolve in the Strength of the Lord, That the Word of Christ

M shall

